

The relation between Punjabi immigrants and  
selected schools in Coventry

Thesis presented for the degree of M.Phil. at  
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by

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### A B S T R A C T

The thesis describes a set of male Punjabi immigrants who had been to primary school in Coventry and who, when the research was started in 1970, were either in their last years at secondary school or working in local factories. The members of the set lived and most of them went to school in an industrial part of the city, the population of which, especially in the schools described, was split into two main categories, white and Punjabi. The thesis begins with a description of the working class background of the whites and the caste and village background of the Punjabis (chapters 1 and 2). The children of the early immigrants are then described, particularly their attitude to English and Punjabi societies, their relations with their parents and their peers (chapter 3) and their common attitude to education and work (chapter 4). The last part of the thesis is about their entry and passage through school in Coventry. The confusion at the two main immigrant schools and their decline are described and explained partly by the arrival of the Punjabis and partly by the schools being superseded by new comprehensive schools (chapter 5). The achievements of the Punjabis and the whites are compared

and the difference of achievement is explained by reference to their differing social backgrounds and to two different systems of education, one based on a restricted education for the majority, to which the whites relate, and the other based on equality of opportunity to which the Punjabis relate (chapter 6). In the final chapter the work that the members of the set did when they were sixteen is described and it is shown that the set, whose members were united in their approach to school, ends divided and stratified with about equal numbers being restricted to one of three distinct levels (chapter 7).



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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is the result of research which I started in 1970 and finished in 1972. When I started I was interested in the education of immigrants and I wanted to use the traditional methods of social anthropology to study West Indian or Asian children who were going to English schools. I felt that they might provide fresh insight into education in England and that the methods of participant observation and the results of previous research by social anthropologists were ideally suited to explain their attitudes to education and their achievements in English schools.

In 1970 immigrants tended to be the focus of attention (mine included) and a number of immigrant studies were in the pipeline or had been completed and I felt that too many of them were one-sided in the sense that they concentrated on relations within immigrant communities and on the nature of these communities and tended to ignore relations between immigrants and the host society and the nature of the host society. I intended my research to provide information about both the immigrant and the host societies and I expected that the immigrants by being 'out of place' would reveal characteristics both of English society and their own. My interest was education so I wanted to study the relation of immigrants with English schools and, whilst describing the background and attitudes and achievements of immigrants, I hoped to look through them at English schools and at the English educational system.

When I started I was lucky because Marcus Thompson had just finished a research degree on Punjabi immigrants in Coventry (Thompson 1970) and it was clear that Coventry provided the ideal conditions for my research. The Asian immigrants in Coventry were mostly Punjabi and they lived in a small area and so the children went to a small number of schools. In his thesis Thompson provided a lot

of information about the Punjabis and in particular showed that the vast majority came from the same area and caste in India and to a large extent had a common background. I was only too happy to build on the work he had done (and he was happy for me to do so) and I decided to make the subject of my research Punjabi children who had been to school in Coventry. I hoped to be able to meet children who had been to school for a few years and to talk to them about education and their experience in school and to follow their progress in school through records and through observation.

I wanted to do the research as a participant observer and I hoped the fact that I was a qualified mathematics teacher would be to everyone's advantage. To start with I used one of the contacts Marcus Thompson had established in Coventry and took lodgings with one of his Punjabi friends. Later my wife moved to Coventry and we rented and finally bought a house in Foleshill (the main immigrant area) which was close to Broad Heath school. This school and one other, Frederick Bird school, were the secondary schools in Coventry to which the majority of immigrant children went and it was in these schools that I decided to start my research. In the schools I made increasing use of the fact that I was a teacher because I found it helped to legitimise my presence in the schools and my relation with the pupils. Having introduced myself through the schools I came in the general category of adults who were connected with school. This was a category that included teachers, social workers, careers officers and sociologists (the pupils had been the victims of previous research) and of all these people those teachers who were reasonably civil and who made an effort to teach were regarded by the Punjabis with most favour and least suspicion; at least they were seen to be doing something useful. I found that being a teacher did not necessarily interfere with the relation I expected to have with the Punjabis and that it was easier to explain myself as a teacher who was doing some research for a book

than as some form of social scientist especially a social anthropologist. Before I reached this conclusion the fact that I was doing some form of social research led to me being accused, with some justification, of being a government-employed spy. Having assumed the role of teacher-researcher it was not long before I was doing some actual classroom teaching and during the two years I taught in both schools. For three weeks I taught unofficially at Frederick Bird school covering the mathematics teaching of the examination classes (A stream) while their regular teacher was absent and in the last year I had a part time job at Broad Heath school teaching mathematics to fourth year leavers (B stream). I also did a little private tutoring in mathematics and English.

The teaching and research were meant to be mutually beneficial. Apart from giving me a definite and useful role and making me more acceptable to teachers, pupils and employers alike I hoped that my teaching would help me practise and put to the test some of the ideas that I had gained through my research. Equally I hoped that the knowledge I had gained would ensure that the teaching I did would be directly relevant to the needs of the pupils. However, in the end, the teaching and the research proved to be mutually destructive and at the end of 1972 the pressure of work, which was compounded by my living in the middle of the main immigrant area and close to the school at which I was teaching, resulted in both the teaching and the research being put aside and in my leaving Coventry. Now I am certain that I should have stuck to the one role of social anthropologist and have completed my research before I started teaching.

When I began my research the Punjabi children I was most interested in were those who had been in Coventry and at school there for a long time. Of all the Punjabis I expected them to be the most familiar with both Punjabi and English society and for them and their experience to say most about the English educational system. I knew Punjabi attitudes towards education were exceptionally positive and it

was important that the Punjabis I met had been in England long enough to be able to speak English fluently. Not only would this make it easier for me to speak to them but the better they spoke English the more experience of school they were likely to have had and the better their chance of success at school was likely to be.

Because I had school records to go by I decided not to rely solely on the grapevine and on contacts to meet people but to work more systematically and to use school registers to define a set of Punjabis on which to base my research and to establish a list of people who I would aim to meet. As I intended to use the methods of social anthropology I had to limit the set so that there would not be too many members and that they would not be spread over too wide an area or too many schools for me to be able to meet and talk to them easily. Finally I defined a set whose members were male Punjabis who were born between 1.9.51 and 31.8.56 and had been to one of the seven primary schools in Hillfields and Foleshill which were the main immigrant areas. When I first met the members of this set they were aged between fourteen and nineteen, they could all speak English fluently and the youngest were in their fourth year at school (their last compulsory year) and the eldest were, possibly, just starting at university or finishing an apprenticeship. The total number in the set was 185 and during my research I met approximately ninety per cent of the members of the set; the others I could not trace or found that they had moved from Coventry.

When I first came to Coventry over half the members of the set were still at school and I was able to meet them and talk to them without difficulty. I spent as much time as I could with them in school and outside school I regularly went to places where I was likely to meet them (e.g. gurdwara, youth club, pub, park). Occasionally I visited them at home but increasingly during the research I drew a line between what I regarded (and to some extent members of the set also regarded) as their private and largely Punjabi life which was centred on the home



and their more public and English life which was centred on school or work. I took the latter, the public life, to be my concern and I did not make any effort to visit homes and meet families and I did not usually ask questions about an individual's home life and background. Through the contacts I made in school I was able to meet other members of the set who had started work and were friends and/or relatives of those in school or who took part in the same out-of-school activities. Later in the research I met more members of the set when I visited colleges and factories. To do this I first used the careers office records to discover where members of the set had started working and then visited these factories to see the work that was done and the conditions and to talk to employers and supervisors. On these visits and similar visits to colleges I often met members of the set and got the chance to talk to them about their work and education. In this way and through school and through the contacts members of the set had with others I met over eighty per cent of the members of the set. Only those few who were left and whose addresses I had (available through school and careers office records) did I approach directly by visiting them at home.

Apart from talking about education and work with as many members of the set as I was able to meet I also arranged tape recording sessions with some members of the set in which I ran through a set pattern of questions (see Appendix). I tried to arrange these sessions with groups of friends (only rarely did I record conversations with individuals) and they usually took place in school or in my house. The prepared list of questions and points I wished to raise was meant to act as a basis for discussion and as a guide to make sure I covered roughly the same ground with each group. My aim was to encourage as much discussion as possible within the general limits of my interest (education and work) and I did not always ask the same questions or keep to the same order. I had thirty of these sessions and approximately half the set took part in at least one session. On the whole they were very successful and it is from these sessions that many of the

quotations in the thesis are taken.

I have explained that I did no systematic research into the home life or social background of Punjabi immigrants. The information provided in this thesis, although confirmed by my experience, is taken from past research mainly that of Thompson (Thompson 1970) and Pettigrew (Pettigrew 1972 and 1975). At the time of my research immigrant communities were clearly insecure and I took the opinion that more research about background details was likely to add to their insecurity, moreover, in my case I did not think any more research was necessary. I wanted my research to be clearly concerned with Punjabis and education and, if anything, biased towards an examination of English rather than Punjabi society and I thought that I could only justify asking questions about family, caste, class or village background if these clearly affected achievement in school and attitudes to education. Having Thompson's work to go on I started with the assumption that the Punjabis had a common background and this assumption was largely confirmed by my experience. Despite inevitably getting involved with social relationships and discovering differences of background amongst the Punjabis, I found very little evidence to suggest that these affected attitudes to education or achievement in school. The only evidence there was made it quite clear that it would have been far beyond the scope of my research to investigate what effect slight and enormously complex differences in a social background (that had variables in both English and Punjabi societies) had on achievement in English schools.

In two respects my research confirmed my expectations. The Punjabis had very positive attitudes to education and they did very well in school. In fact they did better than I had expected and markedly better than the whites in the same schools. The presence of the Punjabis and their attitudes in decidedly working class schools created some confusion and this, plus the contrast between whites and the Punjabis, suggested two different educational systems. One was a very

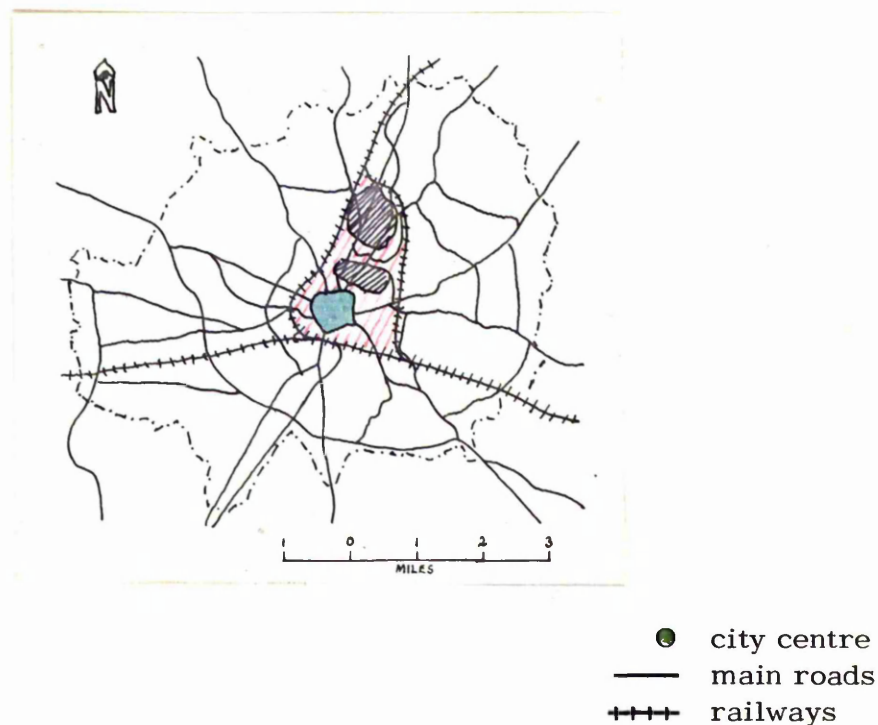
limited system in which there were different schools for different classes and the other was a more open system based on one school in which there were equal opportunities for all children. In this thesis I compare these two systems and relate the whites with the first and the Punjabis with the second.

I also expected school and work to be closely related for the Punjabis but I was surprised at just how closely they were related and during my research it became increasingly clear that I could not take one without the other. Work made sense of school and school made sense of work. For the Punjabis at least school was directed towards work and levels of work were decided by the school. The achievements of the Punjabis that I had expected were in fact only part of the picture of their over all relation with school. The Punjabis did their best (with remarkable success) to take advantage of the opportunities in school and they were in turn severely differentiated. In the new educational system to which they related, the cost of equal opportunities appeared to be differentiation and by the end of compulsory schooling the members of the set had been split into three distinct levels of work and education. In the last chapter I describe these levels and suggest that the new educational system as shown by the Punjabis is like the old in that it is divisive and restrictive and serves the same stratified society, the only change being that school and 'ability' have replaced background in providing the labels for the different strata in that society.

CHAPTER ONE  
THE ENGLISH SOCIAL BACKGROUND

This thesis is about Punjabis who live (or were living) in a part of Coventry called the Railway Triangle. In the map below the red shading covers the Railway Triangle and the black shading shows the two main immigrant areas.

FIGURE 1: Map of Coventry



These two main areas in which the Punjabis live are called Hillfields, which is the area nearer the city centre, and Foleshill. Without being too run down, both areas now have many of the familiar features of industrial inner city areas; early twentieth century development with a mixture of factories, shops and rows of terraced houses.

The nature of Hillfields and Foleshill is important to the thesis because their development and their present state express many of the traditions that influence English education and work. The traditions are strongly working class and very different from those that the

Punjabis bring with them from India. These differing traditions form the basis of much of the thesis and they are the subjects of the first two chapters.

#### Education and work in Hillfields and Foleshill from 1850-1900

In 1850 Hillfields was a suburb of Coventry and Foleshill was a country parish. Both were weaving areas and Foleshill stood out among country districts because many more weavers lived there than in the adjoining parishes (Pugh 1969 : 66). The weavers gave the parish a bad name and 'Foleshill was especially notorious for ignorance, immorality and drunkenness..... (and) the Foleshill weavers had..... a total want of confidence in the legislature and were asking for universal suffrage and a more equitable division of wealth. Their sentiments were obviously of a socialist character' (Pugh 1969 : 66).

Charity schools provided the only education in both areas (Pugh 1969 : 299). I do not know the proportion of children in Hillfields and Foleshill who went to school but a national survey in 1851 showed that 'two-thirds of children in England and Wales entered school and reckoned the school life of the labouring classes to be in months rather than years' (Bagley 1969 : 16).

Work in these days was mostly connected with weaving. Tom Mann, who became a pioneer of the labour movement, went to one of the charity schools in Foleshill and his teacher there has described the situation:-

'Most of the boys in my school are weavers children. Many of them go to turning a loom at nine years of age. There are about 300 power looms in Foleshill, more looms worked by boys now than by steam. The steam costs 3s 6d. for one loom a week and 5s. for two looms. The boys get 3s. and so are rather cheaper than steam..... Few people will let their boys turn if they can help. I have seen boys fall down from giddiness and exhaustion. Boys work all hours from daylight to dark. From 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. is the common time now in Foleshill' (Torr 1956 : 23).

Loom turning was clearly one of the worst jobs, another account says that the work of loom turning was such that small boys 'rapidly

became deformed by the cramped nature of the operation' (Pugh 1969 : 67).

The best way to start work was as an apprentice. In Coventry craftsmen were important people, the city depended on them and their trades and they were highly respected. An apprenticeship matched the position of the craftsmen or master as he was called and it involved a lot more than learning to weave. It was more like an initiation into the craft of weaving and the status of master-weaver; an apprentice had to learn to become a respected citizen. He 'served' his time and was 'bound' to a master for seven years. He had a contract which was signed by his parents and his employer and when he finished his time he was made a freeman of the city of Coventry and was entitled to vote. The apprentice often lived with the master whose control extended beyond working hours. This contract of the mid-nineteenth century gives some idea of the arrangement:-

'The master shall teach and instruct or cause to be taught and instructed the best way and manner that he can, finding unto the said apprentice sufficient meat, drink,.....apparel, lodging and all other necessities during the said term.' And in his turn the apprentice 'his master faithfully shall or will serve, his secrets keep, his lawful commands everywhere gladly do. Taverns, Inns, Alehouses he shall not haunt, Cards, dice or any other unlawful game he shall not play, nor from the service of his said master day nor night absent himself, but in all things as an honest and faithful apprentice shall behave himself towards his said master.....' (Indenture 1842).

Until the late nineteenth century most weaving was done by master weavers and their apprentices. If they were masters themselves then fathers could take on their sons, if not they would try to get them fixed up with other families. The school does not seem to have had much bearing on the work the children did, it was the families and their contacts that were most important (Prest 1960 : 65).

So in the 1850's the best work was as an apprentice who was bound to a course of learning covering both the work and the man and the worst work was as a loom turner who was there to labour and not

to learn, who was hired simply because his labour cost less than steam.

I want to bring out the difference in work and the minimal part that school played in determining work because I shall be showing later that a difference similar to that between apprentice and loom turner survives to this day and that the great change (especially for the Punjabis) has been in the part that school now plays in the process of getting work.

From 1850 onwards the weaving industry was on the decline. Despite changing from being a cottage based industry, with the weavers going upstairs to 'get weaving' in topshops, to being a factory based industry with the weavers walking to work in large red brick mills, the industry could not cope with changes in import controls and the increasing foreign competition (Prest 1960 : 16-17). When the slump came, people had to move from Foleshill 'and in the ten years from 1860-1870 the population fell from 8,100 to 6,600' (Pugh 1969 : 67).

It was not until the turn of the century that work picked up and then, in the 1890's, a new era began in Coventry. It was the era of the bicycle and motor car industries which brought massive booms to Coventry and with them all the immigrants, houses and factories that were to transform Hillfields and Foleshill.

Whilst weaving was declining there were some significant changes in education. In 1870 the state became more involved and Board schools were introduced which were meant either to replace or to add to the existing charity schools. The Board schools were financed by rates and taxes and took their name from the board of people who were elected by local ratepayers to manage the schools (Bagley 1969 : 25). Five Board schools were built in Hillfields and Foleshill and all of them still stand and are being used as schools; with one exception they are the primary schools most of the Punjabis go to.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the Board schools a pupil's progress was based on a series of standards and each standard had to be passed before a pupil could move

on and the pupils were classed by these standards rather than by age. Attendance was a very important factor in the schools. When they were first introduced, the amount of money a school was given depended on its pupils' achievements in the standards and on the school's attendance records and later the school grant depended solely on the attendance records (Bagley 1969 : 29).

Leaving certificates were given to pupils either for good attendance or for passing standards. By 1900 there were national regulations which set the minimum leaving age at twelve with the provision that no boy under the age of fourteen could start work without a leaving certificate (Bagley 1969 : 14). This meant that officially a boy could only leave school at the minimum age if he had passed the required standard or had come to school regularly. This, in fact, was almost the opposite of the present situation when such boys are the only ones likely to be allowed to stay at school.

The government intended board schools to provide a basic education but no more; any further education had to be paid for at select secondary schools (Bagley 1969 : 43). At the same time the government had allowed the boards considerable freedom in the control of their schools and after a while some board schools provided an education that went too far for the liking of some politicians (Bagley 1969 : 43).

#### Education and work 1900-1939 : the introduction of elementary schools

The unplanned expansion of board schools into the realms of secondary education resulted in something of a government clamp-down, and the Act in 1902 which put board schools into the control of the local council and made clear the distinction between elementary schools (as the board schools were re-named) and secondary schools.

Elementary schools were to be responsible for the education of the great majority of children; they were to give a basic education and to 'lay the foundations of conduct' (Simon 1965 : 240). They were also 'to discover individual children who show promise of exceptional



capacity and to develop their special gifts so that they may be qualified to pass at the proper stage into secondary schools' (Simon 1965 : 240).

Sir John Gorst, who was a prime mover in the development of elementary schools, thought that 'while elementary instruction should be provided for, and even enforced upon all, advanced instruction is for the few. It is in the interests of the commonwealth at large that every boy and girl showing capacities above the average should be caught and given the best opportunities for developing these capacities. It is not in its interests to scatter broadcast a huge system of higher instruction for anyone who chooses to take advantage of it' (Simon 1965 : 238).

The introduction of elementary schools set a pattern of education which was to last in Hillfields and Foleshill for the next fifty years. From 1902 onwards children in the area had an education which was enforced and limited; they were the children for whom higher instruction was not thought suitable.

In Coventry elementary schools came at the time when the city was expanding along with the growing cycle and car industries. The growth affected Hillfields and Foleshill most of all as they were the centres of the new industries and with all the work that was to be had people poured into the city and into the area. The council had to provide schools for them and by 1911 four new elementary schools had been built in the area.<sup>(2)</sup> Two of the schools, Broad Heath and Frederick Bird, were to become the two main secondary schools for the Punjabis.

Whilst elementary schooling was compulsory and local councils had to provide enough for all, secondary schooling was left to the discretion of local councils. In Coventry the council reckoned there should be enough secondary education for 7 out of every 1,000 (less than 1%) (Firth 1960 : 4). This was a very low provision and, in putting the case for it, the secretary pointed out that 'Coventry, so far as I can gather, does not contain a large proportion of what, for want of a better term, may be called a middle class population'

(Firth 1960 : 11). True enough. Coventry, with its increasing industrial development, had a largely working class population and the secretary was saying, in a roundabout way, that such a population had no need of secondary education. It was not intended for them.

The big industrial development in Hillfields and Foleshill

Records kept in Hillfields parish church give the occupation of the fathers who brought their children to be baptised and they show clearly the change over from weaving to engineering:

In 1850      64 fathers were weavers and none were machinists

In 1890      8 fathers were weavers and 53 were machinists

(Payne 1969 : 56).

There was a lot to recommend both Hillfields and Foleshill to manufacturers. There were the buildings left from the weaving trade, space for more building and very good transport facilities (3). There were also the people left from weaving who acted as a ready pool of labour, skilled and unskilled, male and female. Courtaulds, who built a large factory in the area in 1900, gave as one of the reasons for their choosing Foleshill 'the plentiful supply of cheap female labour' (Coleman 1969 : 31).

Hillfields and Foleshill were dramatically changed by the new industry and by 1920 the area was mostly covered by factories and houses. The list of firms which started in the area is remarkable. One large mill in Hillfields became the first car factory in Coventry, Daimlers, and by 1900 Dunlop, Singer and Humber all had works in Hillfields. At the same time factories were spreading towards Foleshill. One of the earlier cycle firms, 'Coventry Cross', proudly describe their new works along the Foleshill Road as occupying an excellent site, 'commanding splendid views of the surrounding country'.<sup>(4)</sup> Well, such views did not last for long.

By 1900 two stamping works had been built between Hillfields and Foleshill. One of them was Smiths stamping works just by the canal and one of the first workers has described what it used to be like:

'In winter it was a bleak place, but at least we hadn't got far to go home, most of us, for Mr Smith built two streets of houses for his men. You felt you were right out in the country and Coventry seemed far away. From the upper windows of the works you looked out on the clear water of the canal. In the rushes the white swans used to nest and the cygnets were hatched. On the far side were the fields and the hedges were a mass of blossom. Cows grazed peacefully. You could see orchards and cornfields and farm buildings; weavers lived in a row of thatched cottages' (Muir 1958 : 16).

Seen now, it is difficult to believe it was ever like that. The stamping works is blackened and buried amidst houses and factories and the canal next to it is more full of prams than of swans. Its chimney is dwarfed by a huge ordnance factory which was built in 1907. The red brick houses that Mr. Smith had built for his workers are worse for wear but most still stand. Mr. Smith came from Birmingham around 1900 and he brought most of his workers with him (Muir 1958 : 16); the small beginning of a massive wave of immigration. By 1960 the houses he had built were the homes of some of the Punjabi families.

A series of Foleshill Almanacks record, very matter of factly, the gradual development of the area. Each issue gives the news for the past year:

- 1905 ..... the district is growing rapidly.....
- 1907 ..... builders are extremely busy on the Foleshill side of Coventry where some large structures are in the course of erection..... there is a great demand for houses..... motors are to be met with here, there and everywhere.....
- 1908 ..... houses in the course of erection are taken almost before they are finished..... vehicular traffic on the main roads is enormous.
- 1910 ..... much additional school accomodation has become necessary.
- 1911 ..... hundreds of houses have been erected..... green fields and vacant spaces are fast disappearing..... the number of works and factories continues to increase ..... school accomodation has had to be added to.
- 1912 ..... the erection of an additional 4,000 houses for working people is to be proceeded with..... huge factories have now been erected in spots which were formerly green fields and open spaces.

The first world war did nothing to halt the expansion. The building of factories, the need for houses, the crowding of schools and the influx of immigrant workers carried on. The many engineering factories and workers in Hillfields and Foleshill made the area a focus for war-time production; many factories were turned over to making arms and ammunition and if anything production was stepped up.

By 1920 there was not much space left for building in either Hillfields or Foleshill and what there was, was soon used up by a few more streets of houses and a new elementary school <sup>(5)</sup>. Since then (until recently) the main changes have come from factories and houses changing hands. People have come and gone, attracted at first by the work they have moved in and then, as the city has expanded, many who have been able to have moved out, attracted by better areas, better houses and better schools.

Over the years immigrants have come to Coventry from further and further away. In the weaving days they came mostly from other parts of England; by the first world war they were coming from Scotland, Wales and Ireland and after the war some came from Europe (Prosser 1955 : 129-135 and Marson 1949 : 137-8).

In 1901 it was estimated that over 19% of the population of Coventry had not been born in the city (Prosser 1955 : 130). In the boom period after that immigration was on a very large scale reaching a peak during the war when, 'at one time 200-300 men were entering Coventry each week from County Durham, Scotland, Ireland, S. Wales and all parts of England. Agents of the Ministry of Labour were sent to each area where there were unemployed men and women for recruiting employees for Coventry' (Marson 1949 : 138).

It was estimated in 1918 that 30,000 men had entered the city from all parts of Britain and in the twenty years from 1901 to 1921 the population of Coventry almost doubled from 69,978 to 128,159 (Marson 1949 : 135).

By 1911 there were nine elementary schools in Hillfields and

Foleshill but even these were not enough and they were soon overcrowded (Firth 1960 : 6-7). During the war more school places had to be provided by extending schools and a temporary school was set up in Foleshill. At Edgewick school in Foleshill 120 children had to have their classes in the school hall and at the end of the war huts were erected at many schools to cope with the overcrowding. In 1919 school places were 10% short and several hundred children who should have been at school could not get places (Firth 1960 : 26-7). By 1921, when Pridmore school was built, all the schools, now mostly used by the Punjabis, had been built.

#### Changes in education after the First World War

After the war, many national and local authorities felt that the education received by most children was not good enough. It was proposed that children should stay at school longer, that they should be taught more subjects and that they should have a greater chance of getting some form of secondary education. Almost at once the school leaving age was raised to 14 and state education became compulsory from the ages of five to fourteen. A few years later, in 1926, a report<sup>(6)</sup> advocated splitting the 'all-age' elementary schools into senior and junior schools, with the senior schools offering a form of secondary education which would include practical subjects. The report also advocated an increase in the number of proper secondary school places for 'exceptional children'.

In Coventry the council approved of these proposals but could do little about them. It was a hard time financially and the best it could do was to keep pace with the increasing population: 'No new building could be undertaken except in cases of dire necessity such as providing school facilities on new housing estates' (Firth 1960 : 49). Most other schemes which needed money had to be abandoned, there were still only two secondary schools in Coventry and the number selected for a full secondary education increased only marginally from one to two per cent (Firth 1960 : 54).

In Hillfields and Foleshill the best that could be done was to set up Practical Centres, so that most children had a chance to do a practical subject, and to introduce Advanced Classes (called Higher Tops) at two of the schools which had to do instead of secondary school for the majority of exceptional local children. Pupils were separated into Seniors and Juniors but the change was not particularly significant because in most cases it meant simply the creation of separate departments in an existing school. The only school in the area to become a senior school on its own was Broad Heath school in Foleshill.

Frederick Bird and Broad Heath are the two schools that I am most concerned with in this thesis and in the period between the wars they both became important schools, especially to the people of Hillfields and Foleshill. Frederick Bird had one of the Advanced Classes, Broad Heath was the first wholly senior school, and both had Practical Centres. They both established reputations which went beyond the area. At Broad Heath the emphasis was very definitely on sport and the school's achievements were remarkable. The premier sport was rugby football and the school regularly won the Coventry under-15 rugby shield, altogether twenty-two old boys played rugby for England and two were captains (Richardson 1972 : 338).

#### After school; work and the apprenticeship

Until the second world war, engineering and motor-manufacturing in Coventry were still centred on Hillfields and Foleshill and the people who lived there were the supervisors, the craftsmen and the other manual workers on whom the industry was based. In Coventry engineering totally dominated the jobs of young workers. Around 70% worked in some kind of engineering and 40% were in cycle and car manufacturing<sup>(7)</sup>.

In this situation the apprentices and craftsmen were still at the top and most parents and children looked no higher than an apprenticeship for a good and respected job. It was normal for the pupils from the Higher Tops, the local school elite, to take up apprenticeships when they left.

As in the weaving days, an apprenticeship was the approved and certified way into the special class of skilled men and the language of the contract had not changed much:

'The employer (in this case Armstrong Siddley) will teach and instruct the apprentice..... during the said period in the trade or occupation of aeronautical and automobile engineering.' And the apprentice 'binds himself to the employer for the said period and binds and obliges himself that he shall be a faithful and obedient apprentice..... (and) shall and will in all respects endeavour to promote the interests of the employer and the credit of his works, to the best of his knowledge, skill and ability.'

The apprentice was now bound for five years and he learnt from craftsmen on the shop floor. He could have a hard time of it, being little more than a poorly paid assistant, but he looked forward to security and respect as a skilled man and perhaps to some sort of career with the company or a chance to start on his own. He hardly got any money while he was learning but he had the prospect of being amongst the highest paid workers when he was skilled.

Those that did not get apprenticeships could get work as factory hands doing the unskilled work and there were some attractions in doing this rather than an apprenticeship. Without being bound, the 'shop boys', as they were called, got better wages than the apprentice and they could pick up skills, 'improving' themselves as they went along (Beveridge 1963 : 22-3). With industry booming there were opportunities at work and the demand for skilled workers meant they could move on to the skilled jobs and the good pay.

By now, school was playing a bigger part in the process of obtaining work. There was a clearer differentiation at school (juniors, seniors, higher-tops<sup>(8)</sup>), applicants for apprenticeships were likely to be interviewed and tested, and school work and school reports counted in their selection. But ability shown in school was not decisive, family connections were still important and many firms liked to take on apprentices who were related in some way to their employees, and some firms preferred to select apprentices from the shop boys

they took on, having given them a chance to prove themselves at work. To a large extent, parents and children were able to make their own way at work without help (or hindrance) from the school.

#### Education and work during the second world war and after

As it was in the first, Coventry was a centre for production in the second world war. This time however Hillfields and Foleshill were purposely by-passed and production was concentrated in 'shadow' factories which were built on the outskirts of the city. This way it was thought that there would be less chance of production being halted through bombing, and so it worked out, because when the bombs came they fell on the city centre almost completely destroying it (and parts of Hillfields).

After the war Coventry expanded yet again. More factories, more houses, more immigrants, more schools, and from 1945-51 the population rose from 221,970 to 259,200<sup>(9)</sup>. This time Hillfields and Foleshill were full and the development passed over them and covered an outer ring round the city.

The new areas were clearly better than the old. There was work in the shadow factories (now major centres of production) or on new industrial estates; there were new houses, with modern conveniences, which were often part of estates with plenty of space and greenery and perhaps most important of all there were the new schools which were purpose built comprehensives.

Hillfields and Foleshill were downgraded. In the development after the war both areas were low down on the list of priorities; the new areas had to be built and the city centre had to be re-built, so in Hillfields and Foleshill the houses, the schools and the factories had to stay as they were.

Just as at the end of the first war, the end of the second war was a time for educational change. The changes were according to a familiar theme; more school and more secondary education. The leaving age was raised, secondary education was made free for all and



two stages of education were proposed for everyone: primary and secondary. The period of state education was now to last from five to fifteen.

Whilst earlier thinking had been that not everyone was fit for secondary education, the thinking now was that not everyone was fit for the same type of secondary education. Educationists reckoned that, to suit everyone, there should be three different types of secondary education, grammar, technical and modern, for, supposedly, three different types of children and mentality. At one extreme was the grammar school boy 'who can take a long view and hold his mind in suspense' and at the other was the modern boy who 'because he is interested only in the moment may be incapable of a long series of connected steps' (Bagley 1969 : 72-3).

This change in theory did not result in any great change in practice. Under the previous thinking most of those who were not fit for higher instruction were working class and now it turned out that the modern boy, interested only in the moment and so not fit for grammar school, also happened to be working class.

The decision as how best to provide the three types of education (in one school or in separate schools) was left to local councils and most of them adjusted their existing schools so that elementary or senior schools became secondary moderns and secondary schools became grammar schools.

This happened to some extent in Coventry, but there the situation was more complicated because the changes, just as they had before, came at a time of rapid growth, and... 'the large modern estates on the outskirts of the city presented a particular problem' (Pugh 1969 : 303). Given that it would have to build new schools for the new estates the council decided to make these 'all-in-one' or comprehensive schools and to make the existing elementary schools into secondary moderns until such time as they also could be replaced by comprehensive schools. Thus the change to over all comprehensive education was to happen in stages and by 1970, when I was doing the research,

surprisingly little had happened in Hillfields and Foleshill. All that had changed was that Frederick Bird and Broad Heath had become the two local secondary modern schools.

From the beginning of the century the education provided for the people of Hillfields and Foleshill and the work they have done have not changed that much. Never more than two to three per cent of the children have been selected for grammar school. The mass of the children have been expected to do their period of state education (rather like national service), initially from 5-12 and finally from 5-15, and then to start some form of manual work. Going even further back, the board school, the apprentice and the loom turner are not so far from the secondary modern, the apprentice and the machine operator.

For the first 50-60 years of this century the enormous demand for labour in Coventry has resulted in almost continuous immigration. The changes and increases in population have put great pressure on the schools. Hillfields and Foleshill have been the areas most affected by immigration and the old schools in the area have had most to cope with. In 1943 a report was written about backwardness in the city's schools and some of the schools in the area were mentioned as having a large number of backward children. The schools had problems with people coming from all over Britain and with 'the admission of all ages and capacities, some with fair grounding and some with none, and coming from all parts of the British Isles each with a different traditional cultural background and in some cases with a language difficulty' (Cleugh 1943). Twenty-five years later the same thing could have been written only this time it would have been British Commonwealth instead of British Isles.

A short while after the war, the demand for labour reached a new peak and the labour pool got wider and more and more immigrant workers came from commonwealth countries. Most of the new wave of immigrants were Punjabis from India and they followed one long-

standing tradition at least when they moved into Hillfields and Foleshill to live and work.

### Conclusion

When the Punjabis arrived, Hillfields and Foleshill had been working class<sup>(10)</sup> areas for over one hundred years: but the newcomers were not to know this. They were immigrants come to work yes, cheap labour yes; but they were a long way from the working class traditions that I have described in this chapter and a long way from the type of education and work that the schools were identified with. The schools awaited them as red brick monuments to a sort of national educational service where the sons of manual workers went to get their statutory education for a statutory length of time before, in their turn, starting as manual workers. But the latest immigrants knew nothing of that; they came with strong ideas and traditions of their own.

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

- (1) South Street      built    1874  
Edgewick            "        1876  
Wheatley Street    "        1893 (used as a secondary school annexe)  
Paradise            "        1894  
Red Lane            "        1895
- (2) Longford Park     "        1893  
Frederick Bird      "        1905  
John Gulson         "        1908  
Broad Heath         "        1911
- (3) The canal and the railway ran through the area as did two main roads, the Foleshill and Stoney Stanton roads; there was also a tramway down the Foleshill road.
- (4) Taken from 'Coventry up to Date' which is a catalogue giving short details of the different firms in Coventry and which was published in 1896.
- (5) Pridmore school built 1921.
- (6) The Hadow report.
- (7) Taken from the analysis of juvenile employment in Coventry 1939-40.
- (8) Transfer from juniors to seniors was not automatic and a pupil could get stuck in the juniors.
- (9) Taken from the city of Coventry review plan 1926 p.26.
- (10) In this thesis I assume that the class system represents the system of social stratification in English society but I do not think that it is necessary for me to attempt any precise definition of class. I am mainly concerned with the lower levels of social class (under any definition) in a highly industrial situation and, in such circumstances, I can define class quite adequately in terms of occupation. As far as this thesis is concerned the only

consequences of defining class so crudely are that industrial manual workers (black/white immigrant/non-immigrant) are taken to be members of the working class and members of the professions (doctor, teacher etc.) are taken to be middle class.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PUNJABI SOCIAL BACKGROUND

#### Introduction

The second chapter is about the Punjabis, where they came from and why they came to Coventry. It is also about the traditions and the attitudes to education and work on which many of their later achievements are based.

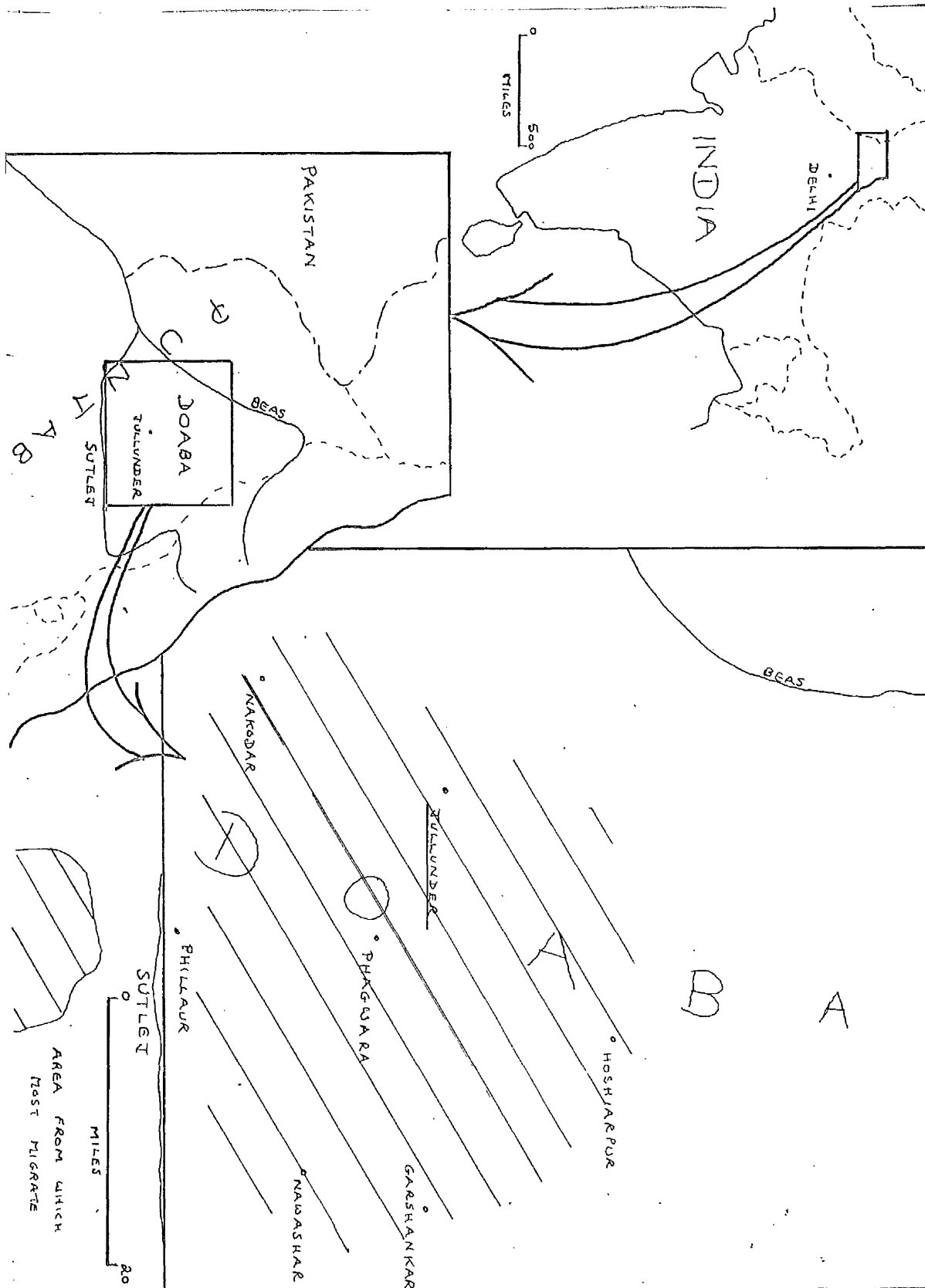
Most of the fathers of those Punjabis in the set came to Coventry during the 1950's and early 1960's and during this period the majority of commonwealth immigrants were Punjabis from India; only later (in Coventry) did the number of immigrants from other parts of India and the commonwealth balance those from the Punjab. In the last part of the chapter I show the proportions of immigrants from different parts of the commonwealth and I show that the two dominant groups at school when I was doing the research were the whites<sup>(1)</sup> and the Punjabis<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### Doaba: the area the Punjabis come from

Most of the Punjabi immigrants come from a small area in the Punjab called Doaba (see map below - Fig.2). The area is about as big as an average sized English county and from it men and families have emigrated to all parts of the world. Doaba is so called because it is the land between two (do) rivers (aba). The Punjabis in Coventry do not come from all over the area but from the part to the south covering seven main towns: Jullunder, Nakodar, Phillaur, Nawashar, Garshankar, Phagwara and Hoshiarpur (Thompson 1970 : 129). Wherever there are Asian immigrants there will almost certainly be some who have come from around these towns.

It is hard to explain how the migration started from this area and why, compared to all other areas, it should have become such a centre for migration, but there are certain features that do distinguish Doaba

FIGURE 2: MAP OF DOABA, PUNJAB



particularly the southern part, and which make the move from a village to an engineering factory in Coventry more understandable.

On the whole the land is good in Doaba and it is particularly fertile in the southern part around Jullunder (John 1969 : 13 and Pettigrew 1972). One family in Coventry decided to buy land there rather than near their village which was further to the north, near Hoshiarpur. Thompson says that 'the Jats of Doaba live in prosperity not poverty' (Thompson 1970 : 80).

Whilst the land is productive, land holdings tend to be small and are noticeably smaller than land holdings in some other parts of the Punjab which have a social system which revolves round the large landowner. In parts of southern Doaba the average acreage per landowner is under three acres (Thompson 1970 : 73 and Pettigrew 1972).

Jullunder, which is the main district in the south, is one of the most densely populated districts in the whole of the Punjab (Thompson 1970 : 71-2) and compared to many other areas in the Punjab the southern part of Doaba is well developed (Pettigrew 1972). From the beginning of the century there have been schools providing a basic education and since 1950 most of the villages have had electricity and there have been good road and rail communications. This is a description of a present day village:

'A Doabi village has a large number of houses, many of them four story, crowded into a very small area and connected by a network of paved streets. There is often a hospital in the village, a branch of a bank, a separate building for the post office plus a petrol pump. The shops usually include some for machine repairs, radio repairs and furniture repairs' (Pettigrew 1972).

This development, the small landholdings (in a traditionally farming area) and the large population are all aids to migration. The other great aid is the society itself which fosters ambitious families.

#### The social system : caste

The caste system exists in Doaba as it does, in one way or



another, throughout India<sup>(3)</sup> (Thompson 1970 : 125-6). It produces a society in which there are great divisions and inequalities. In the system each person is a member of a caste and the different castes (there are many of them) are arranged in a hierarchy. The hierarchy varies slightly from district to district and castes may not agree to their place in the local hierarchy, but they all will agree that they have a place, which is above, below or possibly equal to that of some other caste. Each caste knows (or claims) its place.

The caste system affects most aspects of village life and a range of norms and restrictions clearly shows both the divisions between castes and the hierarchy. These show the castes to be separate but related and they make it clear that each individual is part of one social group which is above or below other social groups.

The separation between castes is expressed most clearly by the marriage restrictions which make it rare for anyone to marry outside their caste, and the relation between castes is often shown in the cooking, serving and eating of food. Eating freely together implies equality of status whereas any one way exchange, either just giving or just receiving food, implies inequality and places those involved above or below each other. Work can express both the relation and the separation between castes; traditionally each caste has a different occupation and the different castes provide or do the work for each other. Who provides and who does what work and the way and how much they are paid all show up relative positions in the hierarchy.

The castes at the higher levels of the hierarchy have the most status and power and the castes at the lowest levels have the least. Generally the Brahmans are at the top and the Chure and Chamars are at the bottom but a caste's position in the hierarchy is not immutable even as far as different aspects of village life are concerned. In the Brahmans' case their position may be more ritual than anything else and whilst being the purest caste they may not be the most powerful. In Doaba for instance the most powerful caste is the Jat caste

(Thompson 1970 : 125). It is known as the dominant caste and it is the Jats who own the land and who control the everyday life of the village. Along with other castes any Brahmans in the village will be largely dependent on the Jats.

It is difficult to know the extent to which the caste system is changing in Doaba because there is very little research available. No doubt changes in land-ownership (not only the Jats now own land), in work and pay (there is more work besides farming, e.g. light industry) and in education will have had their effect but there is no reason to believe that such changes will have obscured the caste system. For the purposes of this thesis I am not so interested in the mechanics of the system as in the underlying values and the attitudes associated with it, particularly in the importance of hierarchy and status and in the position of the Jats at the top. For it is mostly the Jats who have migrated from Doaba and I claim that they bring with them a tradition of dominance and a great awareness of status and hierarchy.

#### The individual and the family

The caste system affects families just as much as it does castes and the attitudes associated with it affect all social relations and not just those between castes. Whilst a caste may be seen as a homogenous unit by an outsider, within a caste individuals are differentiated and status is as important to a family as it is to a caste.

The family is the most important social group within a caste and it is the group to which the individual is most intimately connected. Ideally the male line of a family should stay together and whilst not necessarily living together they should be prepared to pool their resources and to support each other. Therefore a man's family, apart from his wife and children, can include grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, brothers, nephews, and all their wives and any unmarried sisters and daughters (Thompson 1970 : 146).

Whilst the ideal is for males in a family to stay together, over a period of time families increase and they split. This means that at any

one time there is a patrilineal family group that tends to act together (the joint family) and which is related to other families by descent (i.e. families who have split) and to other families by marriage. The relatives that an individual recognises, based on descent or marriage, are what make up his extended family<sup>(4)</sup> (Mayer 1961 : 172).

Marriages are a highly important part of social relations within castes. People are expected to marry within their caste and through marriage and marriage restrictions families are related and separated and the status and hierarchy of families is expressed. When a woman marries she moves to her husband's family and the gifts and rituals that are involved in marriage often express a difference in status between families (Dumont 1966 : 167).

Marriage also shows the interdependence between an individual and his family. To a large extent each individual is a representative of a family. His (or her) status will be affected by his (or her) family's status and vice versa, they rely on and protect each other. Marriages are arranged by families so an individual has to marry through the family. What can be arranged depends on both individual and family and both have a lot to gain or lose (socially and financially) through marriage<sup>(5)</sup> (Pettigrew 1972 : 354-360).

#### Status and land ownership

The ownership of land is another important indication of status, especially for the Jats who are the traditional landowners. The more land a family owns, the higher its status and for a Jat..... 'to be a non-landowner was not respectable. It meant not only that one no longer belonged to the group that had ruled the Punjab, but it also meant having to marry one's daughters and sisters without dowry and with no choice as to the families into which they would be sent..... The social disgrace of being without land was that it placed one in the category of those that did agricultural labour. That is those who worked for others who were servants and not owners and who therefore were without independence' (Pettigrew 1972 : 355).

In the Punjab the customary law is that inherited land should be divided equally amongst all brothers. Whilst some do not, most families follow this customary law and there is..... 'a habit of sharing out ancestral property even to those members who have other resources and who are established successfully in other spheres. The latter do not relinquish their shares and the land on the death of the father is still divided into as many shares as it would have been if they had remained in the village' (Pettigrew 1972 : 357).

The division of land gives brothers a separate identity and it shows that the idea of the joint family does not rule out differences and separation within a family. In fact a wide separation can exist between brothers (and their immediate family of wife and children) within an over all attachment to the joint family. Often there are considerable differences between brothers in the same family. 'Within any one Jat family all types of persons in terms of education and employment and levels of prosperity and sophistication can be found and all maintain intimate social relations with each other' (Pettigrew 1972 : 354). Whilst these differences may eventually result in a split, the important thing is that they are not seen as a threat to the family rather they are likely to be seen to its credit and to be in support of the ideal of the joint family. A man with his wife and children are expected to have a fair measure of independence without weakening the joint family.

Still more important is the effect the division of land has on a family's ambition and status. By dividing the land, families are endlessly dissipating status and a feature of the society are the constant changes in family fortunes (Pettigrew 1972 : 356-7). At any one time there will be marked differences between families but the differences are not fixed over a period of time. One family's position gets worse and another's gets better. These ups and downs and the importance of status add up to a continuous pressure on families to do well. In each generation families may have to compete for status rather than have it ascribed. Families and individuals are expected to be ambitious and

to make considerable efforts to maintain or improve their position.

At the beginning of this chapter I described the small landholdings and the pressure on land that are common in Doaba. The division of land adds to these factors which all make it difficult for families to realise their ambitions through land alone. In such conditions many families look to alternatives such as education and migration to improve their positions.

Education is not free and the expense of that also presents families with problems. It is reckoned that 'for a man with a family of five children two acres is required for subsistence. If the children are to be educated ten acres is necessary' (Pettigrew 1972). With land holdings averaging three acres many families are not going to find it easy to take full advantage of the education available. The fact that neither land nor education are readily available increases the pressure to migrate. However, before considering migration I want to look at the attitudes of the Jats towards education and work; these also can encourage migration.

### Education

Although there has been education available in the villages since the beginning of the century the Jats have not always been very interested:

'Rich urban Hindus towards the latter half of the last century and then urban Sikhs (usually of other castes)..... were the first to educate themselves and the Jats only followed on a mass scale subsequent to independence. For the Jats recognised power was, and is, power over people and not over ideas. And those Jats that were involved in creative knowledge and its transmission - teachers and intellectuals - had and have a low status. They are doing 'naukerii' (i.e. they are servants), they are 'munshis' (i.e. clerks). And to do so and to be so is against the ethos of the community. Ruling and commanding is considered by the community to be its appropriate role and to be its right. Hence Jats have traditionally enlisted into those professions that have given them the impression that they are in control of others. They have gone into the police because the police are feared, into the army because they have men under them, into the administration service because they can dictate to villagers. And they have gone into transport because, as the owner of a truck or taxi, a man is master of himself

free and independent, but also regards himself as master of the road' (Pettigrew 1972 : 361). (My underlining).

In keeping with these sentiments the Jats admire physical achievements that befit a MAN and tend to cultivate the sort of physique that expresses their dominance. A man gets respect if he excels in the local sports of wrestling and kabaddi, which is very popular and could be described as a team wrestling game in which speed, strength and size are most important.

However, most Jats need education if they are going to reach what they regard as suitable positions outside the village and despite the difficulties a lot of families have in affording it, it is clearly to their advantage if some of the family are well educated and have got a good job and are therefore not dependent on the land. That way the family gains socially in the status that comes with the education and the job and it gains through having less of the family dependent on the land. On top of that the member of the family with the good job should be able to send money back to the village which will help the family to buy more land, more education etc. and so build up its position.

In the Punjab the Jats do not expect an educated man to do manual work (c.f. chapter one in which I described manual workers not expecting to be well educated). The Jats feel that whilst it is certainly proper for an educated man to own land it is not proper for him to farm it himself. 'Men educated beyond the matriculation stage (O level) felt it beneath their dignity to water the rehat and to plough the land with bullocks' (Pettigrew 1972 : 355). They shared these feelings with their families so that where the family had a choice the least educated was likely to be chosen to look after the land. It made most sense because a man and his family did not get the best out of a good education by going back to the village and farming. 'If an educated brother returned to the land his action was unacceptable to the family. Landowners, some with university degrees in agriculture and farming successfully large acres with the most modern equipment, were yet extremely dissatisfied that they had to remain in the village,

and in many ways thought themselves inferior to those of their relatives employed in administration or army service..... Most educated young men did not go back to the land for reasons of prestige and status' (Pettigrew 1972 : 355).

A Jat's attitude to education is mainly functional, we have already seen that they do not think much of teachers and intellectuals, the people who live off education. To a Jat 'there is no use for (knowledge) if it cannot be applied to the solution of some practical problem' (Pettigrew 1972 : 360-1). Education did give a Jat and his family extra status but that was to a large extent wasted if the education was not used to get suitable work where control or usefulness was evident. 'Those in the professions who are respected are those who demonstrate their usefulness. Namely they are the doctor, the engineer, the lawyer or those who can oblige e.g. the government administrator and the income tax officer' (my underlining) (Pettigrew 1972 : 361).

Thus there were two types of work most acceptable to a Jat. For those without education there was farming, and a man was respected for being a good farmer and for being successful in village life; and for those with a good education there were the professions, and a man was respected for leaving the village and getting one of the jobs I have described. What was not considered was just that sort of work covered in the last chapter, i.e. the whole range of manual and low-level white collar work common in an industrial society, in fact all the types of work that the working class children in Hillfields and Foleshill were expected to do when they left school.

The all or nothing attitudes of the Jats towards education and work leave a gap into which fall those individuals who have been educated but who cannot find suitable work. For such people a return to the village and the farm not only puts increased pressure on the land but also means failure. In such cases migration can be a very convenient alternative, for manual work in another society is both acceptable and profitable.

Migration : a long-standing tradition

'In Doaba there are deeply rooted traditions (mainly amongst the Jats) both of migration and of military service' (Pettigrew 1972). Both have proved to be 'profitable and without disadvantages' (Pettigrew 1972) and for a long time men from Doaba have been leaving their villages and going to other parts of India and to other countries. During the last part of the nineteenth century they went to form the canal colonies in West Punjab (Thompson 1969 : 75 and Pettigrew 1972 : 35), and by the first part of the twentieth century they were going to Fiji, Canada, California, Singapore and East Africa (Thompson 1969 : 66). Once there they have helped others from their families or villages to join them and gradually communities of Punjabis have been established.

Through migration a man leaves the land and if all goes well earns money and finds opportunities which he can share with the joint family. Migration is not normally a matter of making a fresh start but rather of continuing ambitions that are firmly rooted in the Punjab. For most people migration is a positive step, not so much away from the joint family and the values of Punjabi society, as in support of them. Migrants are still attached and obliged to their joint family in Doaba and they are expected to remit money and to help others to join them or to do well at home.

Not everyone can afford to migrate, nor have they the chance to, nor may they want or need to. Very often those who migrate are redundant as far as the family's position in India is concerned. They are possibly men with a number of brothers who are dependent on the land and who are not all needed to look after it, or possibly men like those I have mentioned who have failed through education to find suitable work. Migrants are likely to come from families whose position in India is now or looks like being a bit precarious. 'A typical case of emigration in a small landowning family with a few educated members in employment away from the land, is of a family



arrangement being agreed upon where one brother remains on the land (usually the most uneducated) another is sent abroad and the youngest is educated. If educationally he fails, and thereby cannot get absorbed into the professions regarded as suitable for a Jat, he is also packed off abroad to make money' (Pettigrew 1972). This example is reinforced by my experience and by other people who have written about Punjabi immigrants. Thompson says that 'the immigrants in Coventry include both small and large landowners, the second being from families with more sons than are needed on the farm, who send some of the family to earn money abroad' (Thompson 1970 : 73). And Ballard writes that 'when one hears discussions as to the relative merits of keeping family members, or redistributing them between India, Singapore, East Africa, Britain, Canada and the United States one can have no doubt that the joint family may be operated as an international business enterprise' (Ballard 1972).

#### Migrants from other castes

I write mostly about the Jats because they represent about eighty per cent of the Punjabis in the set and are the subject of the thesis; but I do not want to give the impression that all Punjabi immigrants are Jats. Many Punjabi immigrants come from the Turkhan or Carpenter caste and in some areas (though not in Coventry) these outnumber the Jats. In Leeds for instance most Punjabis are Turkhan (Ballard 1972) and in East Africa there are more Turkhans than Jats (Bharati 1967 : 314).

The Turkhans emigrated to East Africa at the beginning of the century and literally helped the British to build up the colonies (Morris 1968 : 8). They were carpenters and as skilled men they could do the essential work which was considered to be beneath the British and above the Africans. Having been 'drawn to East Africa to act as craftsmen on the railways' (Ballard 1972), they moved on and 'set themselves up as joiners, builders, motor mechanics or traders' and 'they also entered the professions' (Bharati 1967 : 289-314 and

Ballard 1972).

Although they do not have a tradition of farming and landowning the Turkhans have ideals similar to the Jats; certainly their attachment to the joint family and to the Punjab is as strong. In East Africa 'brothers often co-operated in running the business and links with the remainder of the families living in India usually remained very strong' (Ballard 1972).

There are many Turkhan families in Coventry and enough for them to have a separate temple. Most of them have come from East Africa, although usually after the immigration laws were introduced in the 1960's which is a period of immigration not covered in this thesis. However some came before and it is worth mentioning one difference between the 'East African' Turkhans and the 'Doabi' Jats because it is the most obvious difference between Punjabi families in Coventry.

When they were in East Africa most of the Turkhans lived in towns and cities<sup>(6)</sup> and they see themselves, and they tend to be, more sophisticated than the ordinary Jat villager. Their more bourgeois background can lead to bad feeling between Punjabis and it can also be a bit confusing to anyone used to a class society. In Coventry for instance, for practical rather than religious reasons, the Jats do not usually wear a turban whereas the Turkhans are often distinguished by the smart turbans they wear<sup>(7)</sup>. When I first came to Coventry I met an education official who had just had a complaint from the parents of a child who had been hit by a teacher. Parents, child and teacher were all Punjabis and she explained that it was all a problem of caste and that the parents were objecting to their child being hit by a low caste teacher. There were two Punjabi teachers at the school and the official had assumed that the one involved was low caste because unlike the other teacher he did not wear an immaculate white turban. In fact the one without the turban was a Jat from the Punjab (and so high caste) and the other was a Turkhan from East

Africa. Perhaps the moral should be: be careful before trying to think of Punjabi immigrants in class terms.

#### Immigration and why the Punjabis came to Coventry

Before the second world war there were already a few Punjabis in Coventry. Most had come to England and to the city in a round-about way and not direct from the Punjab. They might have come from the services, from one of the colonies or from Europe. These men were pioneers, the seeds needed to start the immigration that was to grow later. 'In the lean days of the 1930's they took what employment they could and, in many cases, peddled cheap clothing in the absence of any other profitable work' (Thompson 1970 : 109). One such pioneer came to England in the 1930's after a few months in Kenya. He peddled goods and then worked on the buildings. This work took him to Coventry and he was there at the start of the war when the factories needed labour for wartime production and 'a considerable Indian element were drafted in as unskilled labour' (Prosser 1955 : 134). He was taken on at Sterling Metals which was one of the foundries in Foleshill. The same thing happened to other Punjabis and so at the end of the war there were a few working at the worst end of the engineering industry, mostly in the foundries round Foleshill.

After the war there was an unsettled period and apart from there being few passages available to and from India (Thompson 1970 : 110), it took time for industry to get back to steady peacetime production and for industry to expand. However, 'in 1951 all Coventry's industries were short of labour. Unemployment was extremely low and there was no seasonal fluctuation. The national demand for greatly increased production showed a need for a further five per cent increase in the labour force. It was estimated that a population of a third as much again could be supported (in Coventry) without the need to introduce additional employment potential' (8).

In a boom period like this workers can move up a grade from

semi-skilled to skilled and workers in the worst jobs (in terms of pay and conditions) are able to move to better jobs. The Punjabis still working in the factories were the least likely to move (as coloured workers and with no contacts) and they remained working at the lowest level where the shortage of labour was most acute. Thus when the employers wanted labour badly the Punjabis were able to provide it by helping other men to come from Doaba and to join them in the factory.

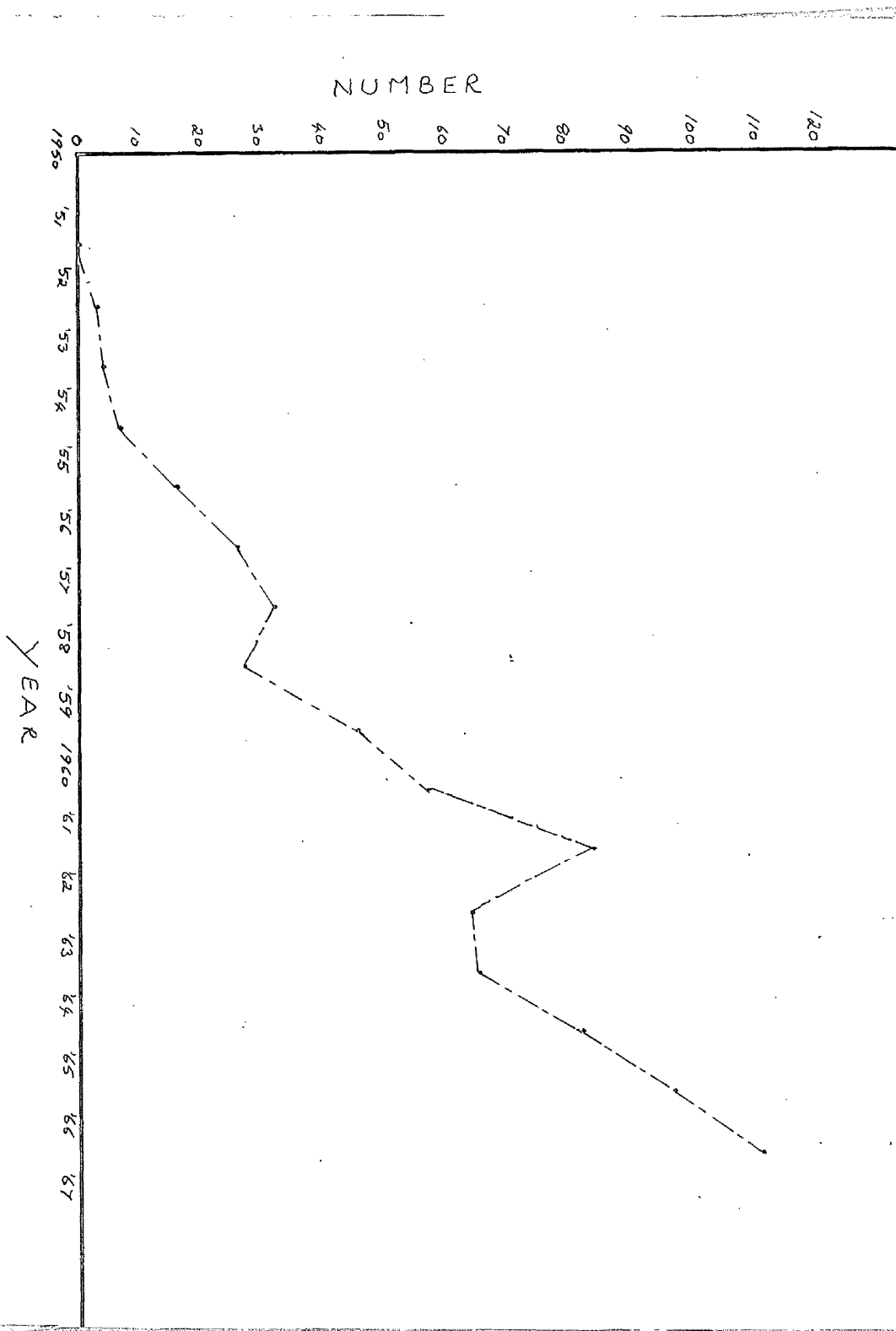
The Punjabis were a gift to the employers. Thompson writes about the personnel manager of one of the foundries in Foleshill who 'spoke highly of the Indians (compared to the Italians), noting particularly their willingness to work untiringly for very long hours at almost any job they were given and of the very low turnover of Indian labour in those days (around 1950)' (Thompson 1970 : 108). What employer could have asked for more, and he could have added that he did not have to attract them by increasing the wages and they did not cost him anything to recruit because his existing Punjabi workers saw to that. It all sounds like an employer's dream (or a worker's nightmare).

From 1950 onwards the men already in Coventry sent word (and money) to Doaba and helped the men they knew from their family or village to come to Coventry and they then helped them to find work and accommodation. A chain migration started up with each immigrant sponsoring more immigrants. A pioneer of one chain 'sponsored about thirty-six immigrants who themselves may have sponsored more' (Thompson 1970 : 110). Because most of the pioneers were Jats so it was mostly Jats who came along the chain.

#### Changes in the Population of Hillfields and Foleshill

After the war Hillfields and Foleshill were respectable working class areas, and local people and teachers who have survived from that time are apt to go on about the old days and how the area has deteriorated and to blame the Asians who have moved in. But I hope I showed in the first chapter that Hillfields and Foleshill were

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF PUNJABI CHILDREN ENTERING PRIMARY SCHOOL IN HILLFIELDS AND FOLESHILL



downgraded by the new areas added to Coventry after the war and that by the 1950's people were moving out to better areas just as they were moving on to better jobs. It was the vacuum that they left in work and housing that the Punjabis filled and it would be more correct to say that the Punjabis (Asians) have put new life into an area that was doomed.

The Punjabis were able to buy the cheaper houses to provide themselves and the men they knew with accommodation. At first the houses were just male lodging houses and with one or more men to a room they were likely to be pretty neglected and squalid (Thompson 1970 : 113) and not very reassuring to the neighbours. In these early stages the immigrants were just interested in earning and saving money either to buy themselves a house or to send to the Punjab to invest there or to help others to come; they did not spend either time or money making themselves comfortable.

The bachelor stage did not last long. The situation in the 1950's, with a steady demand for labour, suggested that the Punjabis had a good future in Coventry and after a few years men started to bring some of their immediate families to live with them and increasingly towards the end of the 1950's the bachelor houses gave way to family houses (Thompson 1970 : 113-120). Figure 3 shows the increasing numbers of Punjabi children entering the local primary schools from 1950-1967 which is an indication of the increase in the number of families.

In 1969 Thompson wrote that 'all the men have now brought some or all of their immediate family to live with them in Coventry... the wives and sons are most frequently brought here, immigrants' parents being loath to leave the village. Daughters have often been left behind in India since it is believed they will receive a more appropriate upbringing there for their future station in life as a wife' (Thompson 1970 : 115).

This chapter should have made clear that coming to Coventry does

not necessarily weaken attachment to the Punjab. Most of the Punjabis have family and land and other interests in the Punjab and they continue to remit money and to go on visits and very likely in the back (or front) of their minds is the thought that they will be going back some day; but all this does not exclude having commitments in Coventry. I have explained that it is normal for there to be considerable differences and separation within the joint family and whilst local family interests and joint family interests do not always coincide, one does not rule out the other. However strong the ties are to the Punjab (and to relations in other countries) they do not prevent Punjabis putting down roots and getting settled and committed in Coventry. The very fact that it is families that have come and that some, though not many, have made the effort to move out of Hillfields and Foleshill is an indication of their commitment. Also many families have bought a stake in a business. In 1969 Thompson found that 'there are in Coventry about 60 Indian grocers, and about half that number of drapers, a halwai (maker and seller of Indian sweets), a record shop, driving schools, photographers, goldsmiths, insurance agents, travel agents, cafe owners, doctors and dentists' (Thompson 1970 : 135). Quite a number of Punjabis in the set studied came from families with a business interest in Coventry. I knew of four who owned cafes, three who owned clothes shops, two who owned grocer shops and one who owned a launderette. Another three families manufactured clothes and there were certainly more who either owned or had a share in a business, or who did a little business from their house.

#### Size and concentration of the immigrant population

Having reached the point where the Punjabis are safely moved into Hillfields and Foleshill, I will end this chapter with some statistics and diagrams which show the concentration and size of the Punjabi population in relation to the rest of the population (particularly other commonwealth immigrants) in Coventry as a whole and in

Hillfields and Foleshill in particular. Statistics about immigrants are notoriously unreliable but they do help to give an idea of the relative numbers.

The population of Coventry is approximately 330,000. The 1966 census says that out of this total population

5,910	people were born in India
1,350	" " " in Pakistan
2,070	" " " in the West Indies.

In 1970 Thompson estimated that there were 10,000 Asians in the city making about four per cent of the total population. This estimate fits in with the immigrant returns of the schools for 1970 which showed that in a total school population of 60,000 there were

2,295	immigrants <sup>(9)</sup>	from India (4% of the total)
892	"	from the West Indies ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ % of the total)
354	"	from Kenya <sup>(10)</sup> ( $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the total)
305	"	from Pakistan ( $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the total).

These figures show that the commonwealth immigrants (the latest batch of immigrants) are a small proportion of the total population and that the largest number of commonwealth immigrants come from India.

It is easy to assume that the Asians make up a far higher proportion of the total population because they all tend to live in the same area (Hillfields and Foleshill). I remember talking to some white boys (age 15-16) who were at Broad Heath school in Foleshill and they were firmly convinced that at least a quarter of Coventry's population were Asian. This was a reasonable assumption on their part seeing that over 70% of the boys at their school were Asian. The West Indians have spread out more than the Asians and a majority live in other parts of the city; compared to the Asians there are very few in Hillfields and Foleshill.

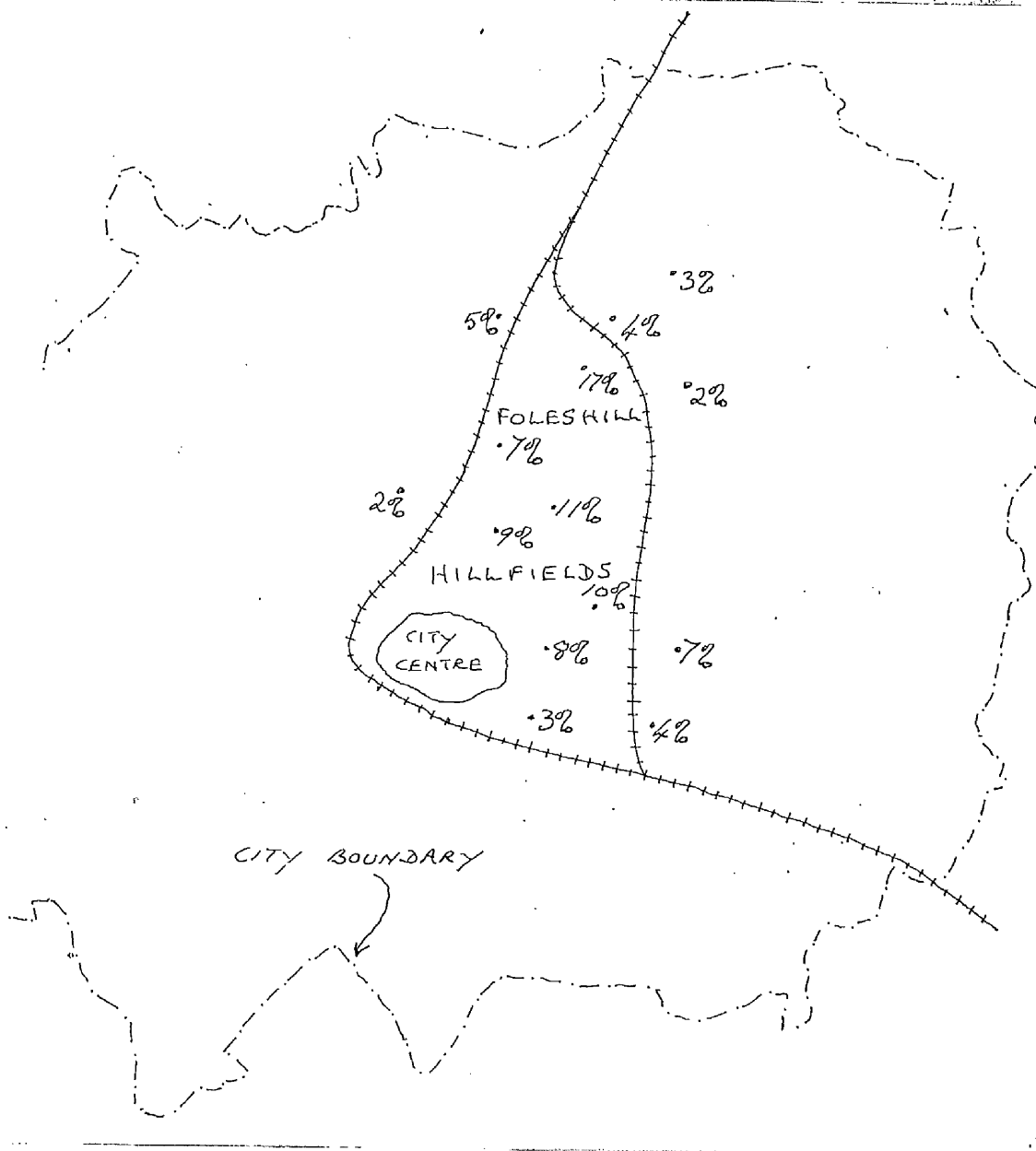
The immigrant returns of 1970 give a good idea of the concentration. These show that while only 12% of the total number of children



at primary school in Coventry were at schools in Hillfields and Foleshill, 60% of Indian immigrants at primary school went to school in Hillfields and Foleshill.

The map below (Figure 4) shows what percentage of the total number of Indian immigrants at primary school in Coventry went to each primary school. I have marked only those schools where the percentage is above 1%.

**FIGURE 4: MAP SHOWING PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH MORE THAN 1% OF TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AT PRIMARY SCHOOL IN COVENTRY (1969).**



Thompson estimated that in 1970 ninety per cent of the Punjabis in Coventry lived in Hillfields and Foleshill. I think that might have been too high and two years later my estimate, mainly from school and careers office records, was that the percentage was between 70-75%. I should think that the set of Punjabis I concentrated on<sup>(11)</sup> included at least 75% of the Punjabis in the 16-20 age range who have been to primary school in Coventry. And the set was based on just seven of the city's eighty primary schools.

Very gradually families are spreading out. Fourteen per cent of the Punjabis in the set have now moved away from the main Punjabi areas in Hillfields and Foleshill. In most cases they have not moved far but undoubtedly the members of the set are more spread out than they were.

#### Punjabis and other Asians

I have shown that most commonwealth immigrants in Coventry are Asians and that most of them live in Hillfields and Foleshill. I now want to show that most of the Asians are Punjabis and that in Hillfields and Foleshill, next to whites, it is the Punjabis that stand out.

Thompson reckoned that there were 10,000 Asian immigrants and their children in Coventry in 1970 and he goes on to write:

'Of these I estimate about 70%, roughly 7,000 to be Indian Punjabis, the overwhelming majority of them from Doaba (Jullunder and Hoshiarpur districts). 15% (about 1,500) also Punjabis from Pakistan, and about 15% Gujeeratis (possibly 50% of them from East Africa). A small proportion of the Punjabis, perhaps 10% have come to England after living in East Africa' (Thompson 1970 : 125).

You can see from this that amongst the Asians there are quite a few different categories. For instance there are not just Punjabis but there are Punjabis who could come from India, Pakistan or East Africa and who could be Muslim, Hindu or Sikh. Over the years the relative proportions of these different categories have changed.

To start with the Asian immigrants were practically all Jat Sikhs from Doaba but gradually over a number of years the range has

increased. There have been more Muslims and more Hindus; more Punjabis from other castes; more from Pakistan, Gujerat and East Africa. Nowadays a far smaller proportion of the Asians are Jat Sikhs from Doaba. But the important thing for this thesis is that the Jats I have described were very clearly the dominant category amongst those Asians aged between sixteen and twenty-five who had been in England for most of their lives and on whom this thesis is based. A lot of the other categories of Asians in the same age range are comparative newcomers.

To get an idea of the changes over the years I went through the registers of the local primary schools and counted the number of boys with Punjabi names (both Hindu and Sikh) and the number of boys with Gujerati and Muslim names who had started school each year. Figure 5 shows the relative numbers from 1950-67 and Figure 6 shows the drop in the proportion of Punjabis amongst the Asians over the years.

To show the proportions in one particular situation I checked the names in the first and fourth years at Frederick Bird school during the time when the members of the set were at school. In 1967, for example, the proportions in the A and B streams in the first year were:

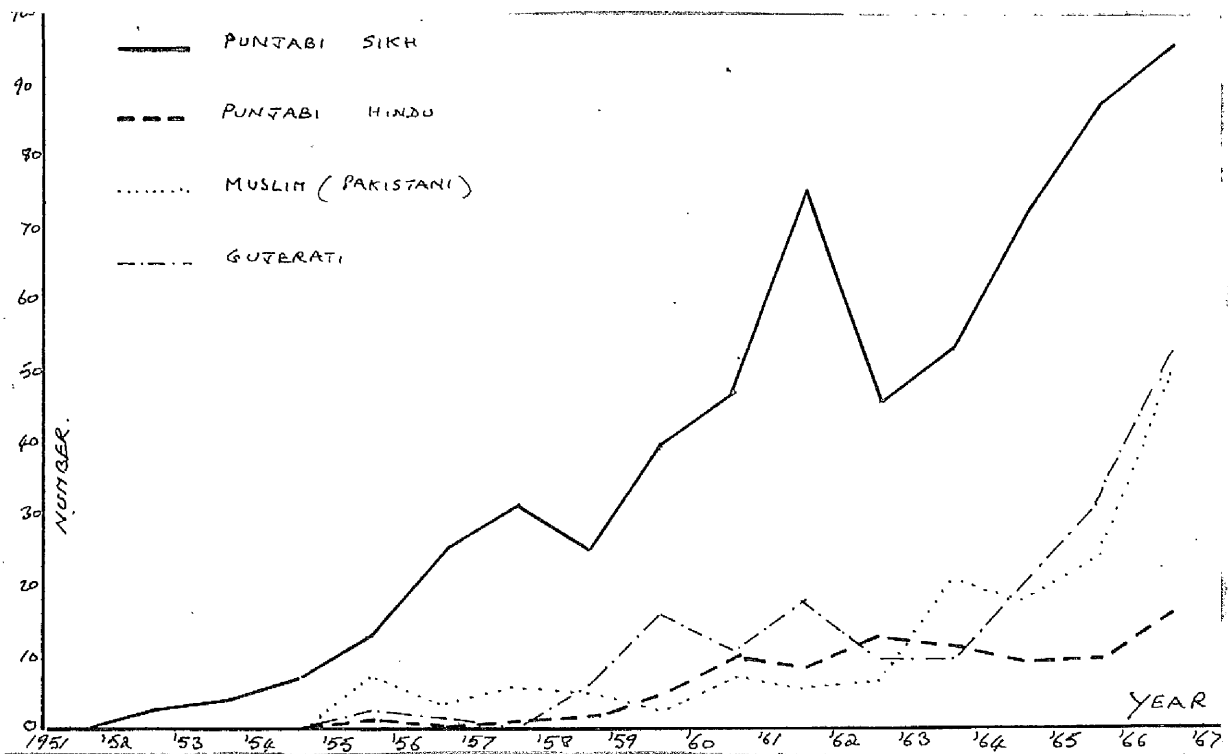
	<u>whites</u>	<u>Punjabis</u>	<u>other Asians</u>
1st year A stream	69%	23%	8%
1st year B stream	35%	52%	13%

and four years later (when some pupils had moved out of the area and more Asians had moved in) the proportions were:

	<u>whites</u>	<u>Punjabis</u>	<u>other Asians</u>
4th year A stream	42%	42%	16%
4th year B stream	55%	26%	19%

In these figures any West Indians (and there would only be a few) would be included with the whites. One can see that throughout the Punjabis are the main Asian group. Typically in a class during this period (1967-70) there would have been whites, Punjabis, a few other

**FIGURE 5:** Graph showing the numbers within different categories of Asian children starting primary school 1950-67.



**FIGURE 6:** Graph showing percentage of Asians starting primary school who were Punjabis.



Asians and one or two West Indians.

What I want to emphasise from this section of statistics is the particular situation in Hillfields and Foleshill where the two most distinctive categories in the population are white and Punjabi (both these categories include some children who were born in Coventry and some who were not). The comparisons I make later in the thesis thus arise from a local situation in which it is the whites and the Punjabis who stand out; you do tend to have the whites on one hand and the Punjabis on the other, other divisions are not so obvious.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

- (1) I use the term whites because it is the most accurate distinguishing term that I can think of. Both categories, white and Punjabi, include people who are working class, immigrant and English.
- (2) The Punjabis I refer to are Sikhs (and some Hindus) from India. I say nothing about Punjabis from Pakistan.
- (3) In this thesis I make great use of Dr. Pettigrew's work and she claims in her book Robber noblemen that 'the social organisation of the rural Punjab differs from that of Hindu India and that the prevailing form of social co-operation bears reference to the family unit rather than to caste and the rules of purity and pollution' (page 4). However these claims appear to be contradicted by most of the book in which she describes a society totally dominated by one particular caste (the Jat caste). She stresses a 'non acceptance of hierarchy' (page 45) and an egalitarian principle amongst the Jats but at the same time makes it quite clear that she is talking about hierarchy within the Jat caste and that she means no more than that there is no fixed hierarchy amongst Jat families and that the egalitarian principle she refers to has more to do with independence than equality. The prevailing idea (amongst the Jats) seems to be that one Jat is as good as another and better than anyone else. She describes a society in which Jat families are hell-bent for dominance (or independence) and, more than other families, have the means to achieve it.
- (4) There does not appear to be any over all agreement as to the use of the term extended family. Some writers take it to include affines (as I have done) others do not and refer to the relatives that an individual recognises through descent and marriage as the kin group.

- (5) Because of the importance of marriage and their part in it women have a special position in Punjabi society. Pettigrew explains that 'links with other families are established through women and if the honour of the family's women is lost so also is the family's entire public position. Her children are also affected because no one in the world would want to marry children of a woman who was dishonourable because they come from bad blood' (Pettigrew 1975 : 42).
- (6) Bharati says that 'East African Asians are all urban Indian and whatever rudimentary rural background some of the groups have had (..... the very few Sikhs Jats in East Africa hail from purely rural backgrounds) they now have no knowledge of the ways of the village. With the exception of about two hundred Jat farmers in the highlands of Kenya all Asians in East Africa are urban people with urban tastes - not sophisticatedly urban but decidedly urban - and with urban aspirations' (Bharati 1967 : 291).
- (7) Oddly enough in East Africa it appears to have been the other way around. Bharati says 'the Jats though in a way more emancipated as a group tend to be more conservative in appearance' (Bharati 1967 : 315) and fewer Jats shaved their beards than the Turkhans (Ramgarias). The matter of turbans and shaving is one example of the pragmatism that I refer to in chapter 3. The Jats as farmers had no need to remove their beards and turbans whereas those who worked in the factories in Coventry did have to.
- (8) Taken from the City of Coventry review plan 1966 : page 16.
- (9) Immigrant is a surprisingly vague word, in this case it refers to the people who have been in England for less than ten years. Under this definition most of the members of the set are not immigrants.

- (10) Most of the immigrants from Kenya are Punjabi (Turkhan) or Gujerati.
- (11) The members of the set were at primary school ten to fifteen years ago when the Asian population was most concentrated.



CHAPTER THREE  
THE ENGLISH PUNJABIS

The third chapter is about the children of those Punjabi immigrants who came to Coventry before 1965. The children are all members of the set which is the subject of this thesis and in the chapter I show how they manage to move easily between English and Punjabi society and I show their attitudes to the whites and to English society and their relationship with their parents. Interspersed with my comments are quotations I have taken from the discussions that I had with the children.

In subsequent chapters I concentrate on education and work and because, in these areas, I found attitudes throughout the set to be remarkably consistent I tend to treat the set as an undivided whole. This could give the impression that I was dealing with an abnormally uniform social group whose members thought and behaved alike. This was not the case. Like other populations the members of the set were in some respects united and in others diverse and there were considerable differences between them. By looking at wider aspects of their social life I hope to give some impression of the members of the set as individuals before taking them together as a set.

Two societies: English and Punjabi

The first two chapters introduced two different societies, working class English society (which is represented by the whites) and Punjabi society. For the first generation of Punjabi immigrants the two societies were, to a large extent, separate; whilst their work and their position in English society put the immigrants firmly in the working class, their ways of living and their attitudes, aims and expectations were not those normally associated with the working class and there was a boundary between the two societies. As far as possible most immigrants worked in one and lived in terms of the other; the money they earned was taken across the boundary and spent

in terms of Punjabi rather than English society.

The next generation: English-Punjabis

The families that came over to join the immigrants included many young children and once wives had joined their husbands Punjabi children were born in Coventry. These child migrants and a few of those who had been born here were the Punjabis that I knew best. When I met them they were 15-20 years old and had had at least five years at school in England. They had grown up in both societies, the English society represented by whites, school, football, television etc. and the Punjabi society represented by their parents, the gurdwara, Indian films etc. Because of this I call them English-Punjabis; they were able to speak both languages fluently and they had a unique background that tended to bring them together and to make them distinctive.

When I came to Coventry I expected the English-Punjabis to be in a rather disturbing position between two societies (the school in one and the home in the other) which were opposed to each other, one being comparatively free and the other repressive, and I imagined the individual to be in the middle being pulled one way or the other. This picture was based on three misconceptions and the real picture was nothing like as two-dimensional.

Firstly, for most of the time the pragmatism of parents was more obvious than their repression. Pettigrew draws attention to the pragmatism of the Jats (Pettigrew 1972 : 362):

'The Jats here in England, determined to improve themselves and to achieve certain goals, will not only work long hours but will do all sorts of work. The renunciation of certain values (e.g. not labouring for others) is not a decision reached after an initial contradiction of values but is purely instrumental towards the achievement of certain ends. This pragmatism fits in with the stress on relationships and persons as opposed to principles in the culture of the rural Punjab - it allows the interests of those at either end of a relationship to flourish and retain what is significant to both..... Their pragmatism is ..... the planned pragmatism of a minority community determined to thrive.'

In accord with this pragmatism parents allowed children a fair amount of freedom and they only became unduly repressive when their children's behaviour endangered the reputation and status of the family. Children were free to do well.

Secondly, English-Punjabis were not isolated and so could not be seen as individuals in the middle of a tug of war. For each English-Punjabi there were always others, amongst whom were his friends, who were in the same situation. The result was that together they got away from the restrictive society of their parents and by staying with other Punjabis they still kept within the bounds of Punjabi society. Both in and out of school the English-Punjabis had their own society which tended to be an anglicised extension of Punjabi society and a buffer society which modified any of the conflicts arising from the contrasts between English and Punjabi society.

The third misconception I had was that I thought that the English society of the whites would be an attraction to Punjabis brought up in this country. In fact the Punjabis were not so much pulled as pushed by English society and the attitude of the whites made it slightly ridiculous to imagine the English-Punjabis as standing between two societies and facing much of a choice. Working class society and English society generally were not particularly attractive to English-Punjabis and certainly did not compare favourably with a Punjabi society that included family and friends.

So when I write about English-Punjabis the reader should think of Punjabis who have lived in Hillfields and Foleshill for most of their lives (and at least since primary school), who relate closely to each other, and, without being pulled apart, relate to the two different societies: English and Punjabi.

#### Attitudes of parents

In her book Robber noblemen, Pettigrew emphasises the concepts that are central to the Jat value system. Concepts such as honour, prestige, respect and reputation, and in my conversations these

concepts, together with the importance of the family - 'the repository of honour' (Pettigrew 1972 : 19), were expressed repeatedly:

'The only thing they're (parents) likely to sacrifice is their money.'

'Not the family's reputation?'

'No. That's the highest thing they've got really.'

As I have explained in chapter two, the parents emigrated for the family, to strengthen or protect its position in the Punjab, and the last thing they were going to do was to sacrifice the reputation and status of their family in pursuit of money or indeed education for their children. Education and money were no good in themselves; education for instance was worse than useless if it led to a Punjabi turning his back on the Punjab and his family.

Most parents saw a danger in their children's situation in England and were worried that their children might feel cut off from Punjabi society and be too exposed to English society. If the result was that they got into bad English ways ('went English' as they put it) all the benefits of emigration would be lost. In the parents' opinion nothing was more important for their children than behaviour. Ideally they should be everything, well-educated, strong, well behaved ..... but at least they should be well behaved; good sons and good Punjabis who had respect and were respected.

'See good behaviour is as good as a good education to them.'

Parents did their best to stop their children from 'taking the English attitudes' and their best to make sure they knew their Punjabi background and where their real duty and interests lay. Some parents obviously overdid it and people who were in no danger of falling for the charms of English society got fed up with parents harping on about the hard times and the good Punjab and the bad England. For one thing how could school be any good if it was English; parents could not have it both ways.

'I'm surprised at my father, if he knows this is such a bad

sort of society why doesn't he stop me from going to school?'

### Good Behaviour

What did the parents regard as good behaviour?.....

'Work, doing education and doing repairs and all that stuff.'  
..... 'Stay home and study'..... 'Sort of do their biddings  
and sort of look up to them and do what they say. Sort of  
represent them so to speak.'..... 'Homework, helping  
them.'..... 'They would like us to go for a walk and come  
back.'..... 'They don't like you to be independent.'.....  
'Doing press-ups.'..... 'Do the home, repair all the  
house and what-not.'..... 'Be polite.'..... 'Stay in the  
house and give all the wages up to them.'..... 'Get a book  
and read.'..... 'Talking with your relatives and mixing  
with them.'..... 'It's just doing exactly what they did.'

These comments present a familiar picture: do not go out much,  
study, help around the house and with the shopping, be nice to  
relatives, 'do what I say'. Of course no one was that good and like  
most parents the Punjabis moaned at their children and usually  
managed to find something wrong. One English-Punjabi I knew was the  
head boy of his school and a model of perfection. He treated his  
elders and relatives with great respect. He rarely went out except to  
the library or to the youth club and he was genuinely interested and  
doing very well in his studies. All this did not stop his father being  
worried about him because he did not help his mother in the house.  
Another paragon, who had started work and worked hard for good  
money and was doing an engineering course at college and who  
preferred staying at home to going out, had his father going on at him  
for being so stupid and not doing 'O' levels.

It seems to be a fact of life that you cannot win with your own  
parents; however you may win with other parents and there was a  
good deal of competition and comparison amongst Punjabi families  
with parents holding up other children (usually relatives) as a spur to  
their own children.

'You know Avtar, well he's educated, he's quite brainy, my  
parents respect him a lot you know, he's very well behaved  
he doesn't go out you know, and he's always in the house  
studying, working hard, helping his mother. They look upon

him as a prize. They say "why can't you lot be like this", you know, "instead of going out", you know.' (I did know Avatar and that he was not so perfect).

### Bad Behaviour

Parents clearly thought they had a lot to lose, and a lot to fear from English society and they were more restrictive than most English parents; but as I have said before, their attitudes did leave room for the normal give and take between parents and children and, within certain clear limits, quite a wide range of behaviour was tolerated. It was only in the extreme that they would do everything in their power to control their children<sup>(1)</sup>.

The worst behaviour usually had something to do with cigarettes, sex or the police, and in general the behaviour parents disapproved of had something to do with English society. 'Fagging (smoking), going around with girls and stealing,' were all bad. So was fighting and going around in gangs and spending time ... 'just hanging around the place with lots of boys.'

Parents definitely did not want to get involved with the police and the main trouble with gangs, fighting and stealing was that they could all lead to the police. Sex and the loose morals of the whites were also a big worry for the parents; it was difficult for them to protect their children when they were endlessly confronted by sex both at mixed schools and by the television at home. Some parents did their best:

'You can't watch a film in our house. If you see anyone kissing the old man turns it over. You're not allowed to have a fraction of sex in the house.' ..... 'If they see a woman getting something off you know they'll put it on the other side ..... and I'm sixteen you know.'

The parents were scared rather than puritanical. Marriage is a keystone of their society and if their children did get a bad reputation through being involved with the opposite sex there were repercussions for the whole family and marriage prospects in general were affected.

'If someone sees you outside with English girls they go home and told your parents. Like me have trouble with the police right, and my name comes in the newspapers, and if someone knows me right, they'll be asking my father won't they, at the factory everyone will be talking, this makes Indian people quite angry because they know they wouldn't get married to a proper girl or if they got a daughter at home she wouldn't get married to a proper boy right.'

With reputation and status so important and competition intense older Punjabis and parents kept a sharp look out for the good and the bad in their fellow Punjabis<sup>(2)</sup> and they were frequently holding up the good (like Avtar) and pointing out the bad. You could not be too careful in a close community as news soon got around.

'You know once, you know, I was going down town, we were on a bit of the nick you know, and this little friend of ours and he was only ten and he got caught see and that day they (his parents) went haywire. They say, "what were you doing with him, the police was round the house, the police was round the house. It's all round the neighbours."'

The restriction on girl friends did not stop some people from having them but it did stop anyone from going around openly with girls in the Punjabi area. I was talking to three people about the restriction, two of them had casual girl friends:

'The trouble is that if you go out with a girl you get a bad reputation.'

'If my old man found out he'd kick me out the house.'

They could see that the only solution was for all the Punjabis to have girl-friends.

'See, if everybody went after a girl, if all the Indians went after a girl, you wouldn't get a bad reputation.'

The enthusiasm that parents had for education combined with their ignorance of what really went on in schools could come in quite useful for their children. Without giving too much away (and with a little deceit) they could enjoy the best of both the worlds of school and home. They could satisfy their parents in their pursuit of education and, in school, they could meet their friends and enjoy themselves as they liked without getting into any great trouble with either teachers

or parents.

'Say I want to go to a school dance, I just have to tell my dad you know, I'm just going to school to see the teacher or something, he wouldn't know you know nor would he bother to investigate, whereas if my dad was educated, you know, I doubt if I'd be allowed. He would sort of be suspicious. As long as it's educational it's all right.'

The parents were more realistic than stupid. Once they saw for themselves or heard from reports that something was wrong they would soon step in. Until then they need not bother especially having worked so hard explaining the rights and wrongs. They could leave a lot to their children's conscience:

'They go on about lying and everything. They say never lie. See if I said I'm going to see a film this afternoon. If I say it's X, obviously they'll say no. So I got to tell them it's a U film. If I say it's an X I know what the answer's going to be. And they say lying is terrible, never lie. If you don't lie we'll let you go.'

#### The behaviour in between

On the whole it seemed to be true that if parents ... 'are proud of their sons they will allow them some freedom but at one point they will stop it', and that children so respected their parents that they did not go too far. This left plenty of room for the normal nagging and arguments about clothes ('they don't like you to wear flairs') and about hair ('everyone they see with long hair they don't like it at all and the skins they don't like them either. As long as it's in between it's all right'). Attitudes in such cases depended to a large extent on the people involved and the circumstances and they were not fixed.

'If I studied too much they'd say come down and go out. If I watch TV they say go upstairs. They just want you to do what they feel like.'

and as far as drink was concerned:

'I'm not allowed to drink or anything. A bloke offered me a rum once and my old man said I'm not allowed to drink it. I've got a cousin who's sixteen and he drinks like, and his old man doesn't mind.'..... 'My father takes me to the pub on special days.'..... 'They wouldn't like me to go to the pubs. Pubs are the worst places. They think that drink spoils.'



If you start going to pubs and you start drinking too much you start spending money.'

In fact pubs were one of the main meeting places for old and young Punjabis and the main objection to drinking was that it did not go with studying:

'He says that drink's very bad for you at this stage. 'I'd advise you to drink later you know after you've finished your studies.''

Some students had to be protected from the possibly debilitating effects of a pint of bitter:

'My father doesn't want me to drink ordinary draught beer. Bottled beer if I'm studying. He reckons that in these pubs they mix things in it and it's bad for you if you're studying.'

Jagjit who had shoulder length hair, was in the sixth form at one of the comprehensives and he explained how his parents tolerated his long hair as long as he did not let them down in other ways. He was attracted by progressive ideas and left wing politics (and so was regarded as a dangerous rebel by the headmaster) and was aware of being a Punjabi - and a black - in English society. He recognised the increasing problem he had of being able to satisfy himself whilst not falling out with his parents and other Punjabis who were less privileged. His long hair tended to be a symbol of his education and ideas and he was well aware that through them he risked being cut off from his parents and his Punjabi friends who were workers:

'I get sick of myself. No I feel a bit guilty somehow. I've got to justify this having long hair. What I mean is that I feel guilty. This is a concession from my parents, I've got to justify this. I've got to somehow earn this freedom. I've taken this freedom and I've got to earn it. It's never put in this way but I'm conscious of it. That so long as I earn it, you know justify it, will I be allowed it.'

### Football and physique

Most of the English-Punjabis really liked football; it was very much their game because of all the Punjabis they were the ones who had been able to pick it up. Although some of them went along to watch Coventry City at Highfield Road and 'Match of the Day' was a

popular programme on television, most liked to play rather than watch. Watching did not bring people together like playing did. Highfield Road, like any football ground, was very much a white and working class preserve and what with gangs of City supporters (pro-football and anti-black) it did not attract many Punjabis and certainly not any big groups of them; and if they watched match of the day they were usually at home with parents who were not likely to think much of football or of their watching television. Playing football was far better because that way they joined up with their friends and with other English-Punjabis and they got some exercise.

Most evenings in the summer there were games of football in the local park and most of the people I knew went off to their nearest park for a game during the week. The games were informal affairs, open to anyone (but usually only attracting Punjabis) and they might last for a couple of hours with people coming and going and a hard core staying until the dusky end. Apart from these games there were a number of Punjabi football teams which played more serious football in the Saturday leagues. And these teams, which were usually based on a group of friends from the same school or same neighbourhood, not only played every Saturday throughout the winter but they also had training and talk sessions which took up at least one night during the week. (See also Thompson 1970 : 229-240).

Most parents were cool about football (I knew only one father who used to encourage his son, who was good at football, and who used to go and watch him play), and there could be trouble if sons played too much and neglected the things that parents thought were important.

'Parents don't really approve of it, they're worried about getting a broken leg or something like that.'..... 'My brother used to play in these teams you know, that's one of the reasons that led up to a bad relationship between my dad and my brother. They didn't like him going around and playing football and coming with an injured ankle or something.'

The parents could see little point in playing a game which proved

nothing physically and which far from building their sons up was likely to result in some disabling injury; also football was no use to a Punjabi, it counted for nothing in the Punjab and ...

'I mean where does it get you? Ever seen any Punjabis getting paid for football or heard of any Indian professionals?'

The ideal attitude was probably:

'You can't do both (football and study). You have to go to practices and all that once or twice a week and play each Saturday you know. It doesn't work. You have to get your priorities right.'

Parents much preferred the really manly sports of the Punjab and some sort of physical activity that was clearly going to be of use to you as a man and a Punjabi. The Jats admire courage and a physique that expresses their sought after dominance. Pettigrew writes that ideally a man should be ... 'big, strong, and healthy..... tall and well-built' (Pettigrew 1972 : 55) and that the Jats tend to walk with a 'confident and determined sway'. Wrestling and Kabaddi were the proper sports for a Jat, far better than kicking a ball around; they were the sports that were popular in the Punjab, sports in which a man could make a name for himself - and earn some money. If their sons were not going to play these sports then the best they could do was something like weight lifting or karate (not boxing) where they could build up their bodies and learn to defend themselves without unnecessary risk of injury.

'Tell you what my old man says, "if you don't want to read, if you don't want to do anything, just get strong and then you have respect you know". Anyone who tries to come it, you just hold 'em at bay. You get respect like that don't you. You do. My brother gets respect. My father goes, you know, "I go into the pub and they say 'oh your boy's well built' and all that stuff"..... 'The Jats are stubborn people and to them physical strength is one value you can respect.' ..... 'Punjabis may not expect strength from everyone but they expect courage, take it almost for granted.' ..... 'They're on about being big and strong.' ..... 'Not strong, just plain fat.'

Well maybe, but it was clear that the Punjabis and the Jats in particular had great respect for manly qualities like size, strength and

courage and they would have liked their sons to be well educated and as near physically perfect as possible.

'They're keen on us being strong, but they also want us to concentrate on our studies and jobs. They wouldn't like it so much if we were weak. I've got bad eyesight and my dad doesn't like that, he sort of teases.'

Glasses were an obvious imperfection and one argument against television, boxing and even too much poring over books was that they all might damage the eyes.

'He says, "do you have to wear glasses cause I don't know, it sort of lets you down. This lad's got bad eyesight you know that sort of thing. The people won't admire you then."'  
..... 'If some guest comes along he says, "you take your glasses off before they come in right, before they see you."'  
..... 'When they say take your glasses off they're more interested in your later life. No parent's going to look at you and say he's good enough for my girl.'

#### Football, parents and being reasonable

Although it was an English sport parents should have been happy about their sons playing football and going up to the park. Sons had to have some independence and they were inevitably going to pick up something English. When they played football, they were independent and they were doing something which although English had the effect of bringing Punjabis together in comparatively harmless activity.

Some parents did not mind their sons going to the park: 'to play in the park is all right but they don't want you going off in gangs', and some couldn't have been more reasonable: 'my parents say work a bit and go out and get a bit of exercise'. But then others ..... 'they reckon it's bad guys that go to the park', and some, well ..... 'you know, say if I'm going out to have a game of soccer. They'll say, "yes, well do up the garden instead." To them exercising is doing up the garden, you know they consider that exercise, you know, watering the flowers, they say, "that's the exercise done, now study."' It was too much.

Most of the English-Punjabis did not object strongly to being

more restricted than the whites. They tended to see it as the price they had to pay for closer family relationships (of which most of them approved) and as a sign of respect between parents and children. There were only a few cases where this respect had broken down and parents were repressive (with children having more to fear than respect) or where children did what they liked:

'Your parents can't make you do anything right, if you don't want to do it. If my parents say right we're going to send you to India because you make too much trouble here, because I been in a lot of troubles already, and they say they're going to send me to India, I don't take no notice of that right and I don't go home early right and I don't take notice of what they say, they just get fed up and stop saying.'

This was Mick<sup>(3)</sup> speaking, and with his attitudes and the troubles he had been in you might have expected him to be a rebel set against authority and Punjabi society. Far from it, he was set against his parents and the police but his friends were all Punjabis and he would subscribe to most Punjabi values. He would not jeer at the person who said more typically:

'When you go at home you have to be you know respectable to your mother and father and when you go outside you're still respectable, everyone you meet you're just polite and everything like that. Like the way you are at home.'

A lot of children did not feel they suffered from being restricted by parents:

'The restrictions that the Punjabi teenagers have they're mostly self imposed you know. I could go against my father's wishes and do what the hell I liked, but I don't allow myself. It's self imposed restriction. It's not something forced on us ..... It's forced on me because of my upbringing, in that sense it's forced.'

or more righteously:

'Everyone finds happiness in a different way. I mean just because we have restrictions imposed upon us, doesn't mean that we're all sort of tearing away you know, trying to break loose you know. It perhaps gives us satisfaction.'

I have used the term English-Punjabi simply to distinguish the

Punjabis who were brought up in England from those arriving here after adolescence and I do not want to imply that the former felt themselves any the less Punjabi than the latter. Most of the sons understood their parents' position and however sick they were of hearing them say it, they saw the sense of what they said. Also they had few illusions about their own position in England; they did not feel particularly secure or welcome. There was all the talk about immigrants and even about repatriation:

'We are in a precarious position.' ..... 'We are staying here as tenant in this country and we don't know. We know what happen yesterday ... but we don't know maybe you send us away in two years' time. So we don't know what the government think.'

They also knew very well the attitudes of the whites, which were, at best: 'they don't mind the Indians but they don't particularly like them either', and at worst: 'as soon as they look at you they tend to regard you as lower, they always do.' And they could see for themselves and from their parents the sort of work that Punjabis were expected to do in England.

In these circumstances it was difficult for English-Punjabis to feel at home in England and to many (including those born here) it was still a foreign country. According to John (Amrik), who was seventeen and had lived in England since he was two, this feeling about England was one more thing that tended to moderate his and his friends' behaviour:

'We're in a foreign country aren't we. You don't go to somebody else's house and do all their house in and come back and enjoy yourself. Their (the whites) home country they do what they like, we're in a foreign country you see. I mean we don't want to get sort of disturbed with the police and get nasty names and all that so we stay out of it. I mean 'course there's robbery and hooliganing in India. There's everything in your own country ain't there. You don't think skinheads are going to go all the way to India and when they get there start doing the Indian in. I mean obviously they're not.'

This comment came when we were comparing the behaviour of the

whites and the Punjabis. As far as John was concerned the Punjabis were comparatively well behaved in England because it was not their country. If some of the whites went to the Punjab the situation would be reversed, there would not be 'paki-bashing' but there would be Punjabi hooligans and his friends and others backed this up by telling stories about some of their escapades before they came to England.

Whilst most English-Punjabis accepted the norms of their parents and Punjabi society this did not stop many of them envying the greater freedom the whites had. They too would have liked to be able to go out without having to bother about parents, to have girl friends, to have more money to spend and generally, without sacrificing their Punjabi and family identity; they would have liked to have more excitement now, when they were young.

English people could be criticised because they ... 'think for today not the future. See it's no good if you keep thinking time come today, you got to think of the future.' But there was something to be said for thinking a bit more for today and less for the future. It always seemed to be the future with Punjabis and parents.

'Get educated, get married and that's it, it's just a straight-forward life ... they just choose your wife and you settle down. I mean it's dull really.' ..... 'You should enjoy yourself. Life is to enjoy.' ..... 'At our age we want to enjoy ourselves more than anything else.' ..... 'The Indian societies too old fashioned, they're not up to it. I mean there's a slight percentage who's really up with it, up with the modern age. I mean many old fashioned parents say you can't go out and so on. You got to stay home you know family loyalties and things like that. Then the others, most of the others round you like the English go out you know. Indians have to stay, they got to do what their parents said to them. What their parents tell them they got to do it, there's no buts or excuses. They just have to do it.' ..... 'I mean you're born and you die. In between you might as well enjoy yourself.'

Most of them must have felt like that occasionally but they saw another side to the freedom the whites had. The whites could do what they liked, yes, but that was because no one seemed to care. People

just went their own way. 'English people think to themselves they don't think to anybody else.' That might be nice sometimes but not all the time. And just as they saw the restrictions they had to put up with as being part of close family relationships and an indication that people cared for and respected each other, so they connected the freedom of the whites with loose family relationships, a lack of respect and people not caring. You just had to look at the schools, unmarried mothers, divorce, children leaving home (before and after marriage), parents forgotten about, old people's homes, child care centres ..... What sort of society did they add up to?

'In later life English people neglect more or less their parents.' ..... 'English boys tell them to bugger off after a bit. If their parents govern them too much then when they're over eighteen they tell them to get lost and stuff it.' ..... 'Many English parents don't care about their kids, they just let them do anything.' ..... 'English boys can do whatever they like.' ..... 'Parents don't give any encouragement.' ..... 'They're not bothered.' ..... 'Look they don't worry about their family, a son gets married and he just goes away and forgets about his mother and father. Then he have a couple of children and they just go away.' ..... 'And if the children do stay at home they most likely have to pay rent.'

The English-Punjabis were inclined to accept Punjabi society and reject English society and they were certainly not pushing to get away from a closed in Punjabi world to an open English world. With fellow Punjabis in Hillfields and Foleshill most of them were able to lead their own lives and enjoy themselves as they wanted. In general they tended to stay within the bounds of Punjabi society whilst taking it a little in the direction they wanted.

#### Unity and Diversity amongst the English-Punjabis

The English-Punjabis related closely together yet there were still considerable differences between members of the set. In contrast with the local white population the English-Punjabis appeared both more united and more diverse. Partly this was because the English-Punjabis whilst being members of a minority group in a foreign society were



often in the majority locally and thus could more easily be seen to be diverse. But the unity and diversity amongst the set also related to a characteristic of Jat and Punjabi society. Pettigrew (1972 : 45) remarks on the considerable differences that exist within Jat families and she makes the point that in Jat society unity does not imply uniformity and to be equal means to be equally independent and does not exclude considerable differences (e.g. of work and education). She writes that in Jat society, 'social networks include multiple ties with men of different types.'<sup>1</sup> A similar statement could be made about the English-Punjabis in Coventry.

#### A united set

The English-Punjabis on whom I based my research were all members of a set which I defined for my purposes taking into account length of schooling in England and catchment area and numbers but with no particular reference to social relationships. Although I expected the members of the set to have a lot in common I did not start with the idea that they formed a particular social unit<sup>(4)</sup> and I did not expect them to have so much in common or to be as socially distinct as they were. When they were away from home English-Punjabis were continually coming together and there was a network of ties between them which tended to encompass the whole set.

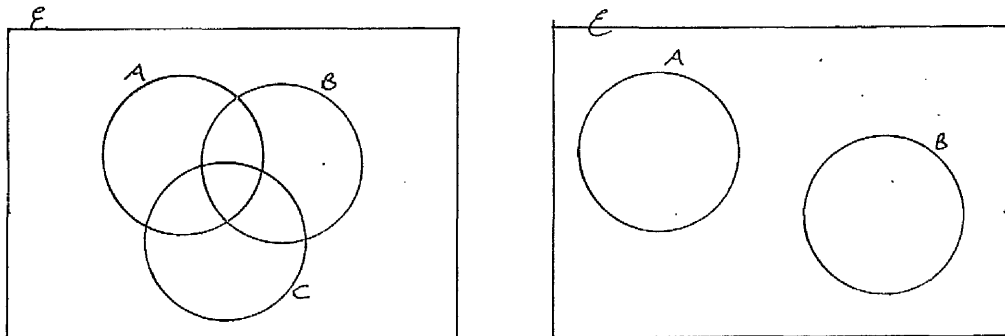
There were 185 boys in the set aged between fifteen and twenty-one and most of them lived in Hillfields and Foleshill. This meant that there were quite a large number near the same age who went to the same schools and lived near the same parks and pubs. Besides living close together in England the members of the set had come from the same small area in India and not only that but the system of chain migration (see chapter 2) meant that many had come from the same caste, the same village and often from the same family. One third of those in the set had brothers who were also in the set and more than half were related to others in the set.

As they had so much more in common with each other than with

anyone else (including Punjabis who had recently come from the Punjab) it was not surprising that in any situation English-Punjabis would tend to group together. But the groups that formed were rarely permanent; other relationships (e.g. family) and other commitments (e.g. study) cut across groups and there was a transience in the relationships between English-Punjabis in marked contrast to the permanence of family relationships. There were no exclusive groups or gangs but rather a series of overlapping groups based on different interests and activities (see also Thompson 1970). Varying groups of English-Punjabis formed in schools, parks, pubs and clubs but membership of these groups was not well defined and the groups did not carry on over a period of time or from one activity to another. I had most contact with groups that formed in school and there, having come together in the same class (they tended to gravitate towards examination classes) the English-Punjabis often formed dominant groups within the class but these groups broke up outside school. Those in the school group were connected to other Punjabis outside school who might have recently left school or possibly because they played football together or were members of the same family or went to the same club. Many of the groups that formed were composed largely of English-Punjabis, thus there was a variety of connections between the English-Punjabis and a network of relations which covered the whole set and left it remarkably undivided.

In contrast to those amongst the English-Punjabis the peer groups amongst the whites tended to be more permanent and gang-like and more isolated. It would be possible to characterise the difference by using the set diagrams shown below (Figure 7). In these peer groups amongst the English-Punjabis are represented by overlapping subsets of the rather limited universal set of English-Punjabis living in Coventry and peer groups amongst the whites are represented by separate subsets of the much larger universal set of whites living in Coventry.

FIGURE 7: Peer groups amongst English-Punjabis and amongst Whites



$$E = \{ \text{ENGLISH-PUNJABIS IN COVENTRY} \}$$

$$A = \{ \text{YOUTH CLUB} \}$$

$$B = \{ \text{FOOTBALL TEAM} \}$$

$$C = \{ \text{5<sup>th</sup> YEAR CLASS AT SCHOOL} \}$$

$$E = \{ \text{WHITE CHILDREN IN COVENTRY} \}$$

$$A = \{ \text{LIVE IN HILLFIELDS} \}$$

$$B = \{ \text{LIVE IN FOLESHILL} \}$$

The degree of interaction and resulting social cohesion amongst the English-Punjabis was possible because there were sufficient numbers to go round and always someone to relate to; as far as the English-Punjabis were concerned isolation was rare and there were always likely to be others in the same situation as themselves and possibly with the same ideas. Social cohesion was also encouraged by the attitudes of the whites. In another society there might have been more connections formed between the minority and the host society but in this case the English-Punjabis were clearly members of a threatened minority community and the whites represented a hostile and foreign society. A few English-Punjabis (usually outsiders) had friends from East Africa (sometimes Gujaratis) who were more 'modern' or less in the Punjabi mould but very few had white friends and for most of them the best friend they could have in English society was another English-Punjabi. Thus the members of the set did

not go far outside their own society or that of their family.

#### The variety and differences in the set

The unity of the set had nothing to do with uniformity and I was frequently surprised by behaviour and attitudes which seemed incompatible in terms of English society and yet which co-existed amongst the English-Punjabis. Because of the variety within the set I found it increasingly difficult to make generalisations or predictions about behaviour. With the English-Punjabis two societies were superimposed and a complex situation was produced which tended to confound my (and others') expectations. Profound differences in terms of one society became superficial in terms of the other and it was easy to apply the wrong criteria. The only discernable norm was very much that described by Pettigrew (see chapter 2), a Punjabi norm which governed attitudes to education and work and in which the family, competition, dominance, respect, physical prowess, independence were much prized.

To show the differences that existed within a set which I claim was remarkably united I am going to describe in detail six members of the set who come from only three different households and who, between them, show some of the more obvious anomalies within the set. When I have finished the descriptions I will draw attention both to the anomalies and differences and also to the connections between the six individuals.

#### Amerjit and Manjit: brothers

Amerjit was in his fifth year at Broad Heath school and he was an outsider to the group of English-Punjabis who dominated his class. Whilst they played football in the playground he might go off to the library with a couple of friends and whilst they looked on school as a good place where they could get an apprenticeship and meet up with friends, Amerjit, admitting that he too was aiming for an apprenticeship when he left, claimed that he stayed at school simply to satisfy his parents and to get his duty done. He was a remarkably independent

person, a loner, who was serious-minded almost to the extent of being tormented. He had little of the usual competitive streak and his concerns were beyond the understanding of most people; he was apt to ask uncomfortable and fundamental questions that passed most people by (e.g. why work, why live and why are you doing this research?). He was no more interested in school work than the others but his lack of interest was due to the work being too superficial and worldly and unconnected with his own search for truth, which was at one time going to take him to a monastery in the Punjabi hills. He was considerate, unassuming and tolerant of the ways of the world but still far too odd for the others who tended to ridicule him.

Amerjit for the most part acknowledged his own eccentricity with good grace (and a wry smile) and was only slightly abashed by the mocking outbursts some of his questions provoked. In school most teachers thought he was a good deal more responsible and sensible than the more rowdy English-Punjabis (who formed the dominant group) and he did untypical things like look after the library and run a social work group. Once he was chosen to represent the school at a celebratory city function, it was meant to be a great honour but he took it in much the same spirit as the gibes he got from his fellow Punjabis; they were all ways of the world. He was keen on judo and karate and twice a week he went along to classes (with other Punjabis) which were run in the local clubs. His closest friend was a Gujarati and they went around together in school and met up frequently after school.

Amerjit claimed that his family meant very little to him and he certainly never mixed family and school. He said that he never mentioned to his parents the 'honour' of being chosen to represent the school and he tried not to draw attention to the fact that he had brothers at the same school.

One of his brothers was Manjit who had been in so much trouble that he no longer bothered about it. He had got a bad name for himself with teachers and the police and although he still lived at home

he did not get on well with his parents. He was short but well-built and usually dressed very smartly (and gaudily) and stood ~~up~~ firm and upright. He was normally generous and friendly but he flared up if he was picked on in any way. He was a good fighter and he was quite prepared to stick up for himself and for any other Punjabis who were threatened (e.g. by whites). He said, quite correctly, that he could handle trouble better than anyone else and that because of his reputation he had less to lose. He did not play football, his main hobby was art and besides being good at painting and drawing he had quite a talent for copying nudes. He preferred the seamier side of life and used to meet up with other like-minded Punjabis in a cafe or in a pub for a drink and a game of cards. Most of them had been involved with some illicit activity that had resulted in trouble with teachers, parents or police, but they were not an anti-social gang. They were clearly and proudly Punjabi and they had respect for education and some forms of authority. Amrik, who was a year younger than the others, was the only one who was clearly anti-school but, rather than confront or disrupt school, he tried to avoid it. He often truanted and when he did go to school he kept mainly to himself and, grimly squashed into a desk, he did his best to make school seem a very nasty and childish business. Manjit, on the other hand, liked school and would have stayed on if he had had the chance; he respected some of the teachers but they usually returned his respect with suspicion. After he had left Manjit used to visit the school and he would always come smartly dressed and do his best to behave like a dutiful and thankful old boy. He came partly to check out his mates and any girls that he knew but he always visited his favourite teachers. Once he came specially to tell one of the teachers that his sister was going to get married; the teacher's reaction was to laugh and ask whether that was a good way to bring illegal immigrants into the country. Manjit was surprised but he was not too put out and he kept his respect.

Shinder and Ranjit: brothers

Shinder was one of Manjit's friends and he had been to Frederick Bird school where he had earned himself a similar reputation. He had been in some fights and had had some confrontations with teachers that ultimately led to him being eased out of the school a few weeks before he was due to leave. Since then he had kept out of trouble and, after a series of jobs, he had stuck to the same job for more than a year and having got engaged was well on the way to becoming a respectable family man. He was very lively and more flashy and fiery than Manjit and changed quickly from laughing and joking, to seriously explaining or fiercely arguing. He told stories of his past with great relish: 'we got a few friends, around seven, and all the school was scared in front of us.' ..... 'This white kid he started the trouble with us. He started kicking this kid you know, friend of ours, he wasn't all that tough you know so we started on the English kid ..... and the teacher started on us, he went to the headmaster so we started breaking up the pipes.'

Shinder's brother Ranjit had been at the same school a few years earlier and he had done very well and after school he had taken an apprenticeship. He was a very talented person, who managed (for a time) to combine a remarkable range of friends and activities. His friends were all sorts, Punjabis, whites, Gujaratis, West Indians and probably the closest was a Gujarati who was at college. He was good at sport and he was a member of one of the Punjabi football teams. He used to play regularly on Saturdays and on at least one evening a week he used to go along for the training sessions and for the talk and drink in the pub afterwards (for a time he had very long hair which marked him out from the others). Occasionally he went along to a school youth club where there was badminton and where he met one of his old teachers and more of his old school friends; he also helped out at a church club because he was friendly with the local vicar. On top of all these activities, as an

apprentice, he had college one evening a week and his studies to keep up with.

Unlike other Punjabis, Ranjit made little attempt to restrict himself and he appeared to be remarkably open minded and to be aiming for the best of all worlds. Unfortunately while doing this he clashed with his parents over his proposed marriage and he left home. In the end his many interests and commitments, on top of his trouble with his parents, proved too much for him. He began to skip college and neglect his studies and finally he lost his apprenticeship and returned home, no doubt to get married. It was hard that Ranjit should be the one who had to leave home because he was the one who tried hardest not to reject either society (English or Punjabi) the trouble was that he could not accept the one thing he had to accept: marriage. If anyone should have left home it was Sukhdev who was one of Ranjit's friends and who was as determinedly anti-Punjabi as anyone I met. Whilst he respected aspects of Punjabi society and defended them vigorously in the face of some of the comments made by whites (particularly about marriage) he could not stand the particular type of manly, physical and what he saw as brutish behaviour associated with Punjabis coupled with their whole emphasis on competition, aggression and pride. He avoided at all costs the rowdy Punjabi-speaking gatherings to be found in many of the local pubs (unlike Ranjit who was pleased to be part of them). He had white friends and he preferred to go down town with them to places where there were students and girls around and where they could talk freely and listen to music. He very purposefully went his own way and made little attempt to hide his feelings; the inevitable result being that he was cut off from most Punjabis of his age (he had 'gone English'); but he still lived at home and because his father was dead he felt a great responsibility for his family. He was realistic about his position in English society and about the attitudes of the whites (on a camping holiday in Wales he had met the standard racist insults)



and he treated his studies very seriously and was determined to do well and to get a good job after his apprenticeship and so increase his security (and respect).

Paramjit and Surjit: cousins in the same household

Paramjit was another English-Punjabi who was close to the whites. He had passed the eleven plus and gone to a comprehensive school which he had not enjoyed and which he had left after 'O' level to do a humanities course at college, after which he hoped to go to University to read sociology. He was very much the student; he had shoulder length hair and spent a lot of his time around college and down town with white friends. He was disarmingly frank and open ('you're welcome') and was remarkably detached about himself and his situation; he laughed about the way different people treated him. Grinning and flicking his hair he explained how many Punjabis did not like him because he was a freak and many whites did not like him because he was coloured. As far as he was concerned he was proud of being a Punjabi (for that reason he did not answer to any English nickname as many other Punjabis did but kept strictly to his Punjabi name) as well as liking some of the things about English society. Despite some rude comments from parents and relatives he was quite happy at home. He thought most of their comments were justified anyway. His elder brother used to tease him: 'Sometimes my brother he sort of comes home and says to my mum look I've got a clean neck, I've got a clean neck.'

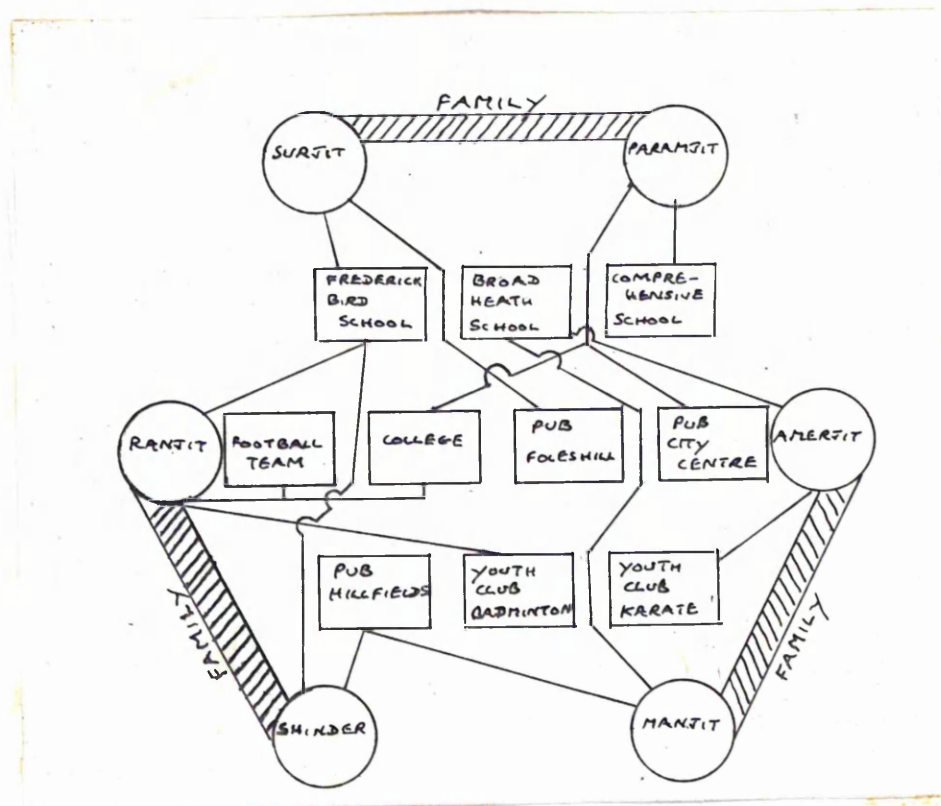
Paramjit lived quite amicably in the same household as his elder cousin Surjit who was a dramatic contrast. He was massively built and, without being in any way surly, was thoroughly reticent and undemonstrative. He made it quite clear that he had his life and that it was up to other people to get on with theirs. In his last year at school he had grown really sick of it and he spoke with resentment and disdain about the 'work' (or lack of it) and about the teachers, one of whom 'just talked about the war and about his family and ate

sandwiches'. He had been in the same group at school as Shinder which had such a bad reputation and had been one of the hard men of the group, but since school, apart from one fight, he had kept out of trouble. He had had a series of jobs and was now labouring in a timber yard. He had settled back into the 'old fashioned' Punjabi society and said he was happy enough working hard for good money (facing it), keeping with his family and going out drinking in the local pubs with Punjabi friends and relatives. Despite his attitudes Surjit had a good humoured respect for his clever and freakish cousin and he encouraged him to keep on with his studies and to get himself well educated. And Paramjit, in his turn, respected Surjit for his attitudes and the way he lived and worked; the hard life of his parents that he had avoided.

Six members of the set and they present a number of anomalies. Ranjit who was a successful pupil and who is correct and co-operative in most things had to leave home whilst his brother Shinder who was expelled from school stayed at home. Surjit, sometimes called John, who used to be in the same notorious group as Shinder but who moved and settled into the Punjabi world of his parents lives amicably with his cousin Paramjit who would not answer to an English nickname like John but who had very long hair and mixed mostly with whites down town. Manjit, now part of the same group as Shinder, who combines a fierce loyalty to the Punjab and to fellow Punjabis with a complete lack of respect for his parents, who has been in endless trouble with police and parents but who thinks highly of school and education and who lives at home with his brother Amerjit who as head boy and a model pupil thinks little of school and the normal Punjabi values.

Between them these six are involved in a range of activities and are thus connected to many other English-Punjabis (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8: Connections between English-Punjabis and the activities in which they are involved



### Conclusion

I hope this chapter has shown the members of the set as individuals and given some idea of their inter-relationships and the relationships they have with their parents and with the whites. My intention has been to describe the members of the set in a wide social context and to show the extent to which they are a normal population before I restrict my interest to education and work and describe a set whose members approach school united by their attitudes and experience.

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

(1) An example which shows the attitudes of Punjabi parents and the position of women in Punjabi society is that of a young Punjabi girl who wanted to be a secretary. In her last year at school the headmaster allowed the girl to help out in his office and he was so impressed by her abilities that he did his best to get her a job with an Asian lawyer in Coventry. The lawyer was male and her parents objected to the work so the headmaster then managed to get her the job of school secretary in a predominantly immigrant primary school near her home. Again the parents objected because some of the people she would be working with, including the head of the school, were men. Seeing her having to refuse such an excellent job the headmaster decided to go round and do his utmost to persuade the parents to let her do the job and after an evening's talk it seemed as if he had succeeded. Next day the girl rang up from a call box. She was in tears and asked him to forget about the job and her work. He dropped the issue and heard later that she was working with other females as a semi-skilled worker in a local factory. In this case the parents had allowed the girl considerable freedom in school (whether they knew about it or not), enough for her to show remarkable ability in a privileged position, but had put their feet down when her own and the family's status were threatened by her working too closely with men.

(2) One English-Punjabi was absolutely sick of the continuous scrutiny amongst Punjabis:

'If anybody comes I go out. I can't stand it because I think they're trying to hitch me up with somebody.'

(3) The English-Punjabis frequently had English nicknames. These names signified very little and were not a sign of 'going English'.

(4) By this I mean a unit which clearly determines or limits social relationships as is sometimes the case with a village or caste.

CHAPTER FOUR  
ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION AND WORK

Introduction

The remainder of this thesis is about the English-Punjabis and education and work. In this chapter I look at the attitudes of the English-Punjabis to education and work and once more I intersperse my comments with comments that I have taken from the discussions I had with the members of the set. Unlike the last chapter I make no attempt to distinguish between the English-Punjabis but treat them 'en masse', as having similar attitudes and experiences. These are directly related to those of the Jats which I described in chapter two and in introducing this chapter I want to emphasise the Punjabi background of the English-Punjabis by referring once more to the work of Dr. Pettigrew.

The English-Punjabis are mostly Jats and so are members of a dominant caste; according to Pettigrew, 'the Jats did not regard themselves as subordinate to any other person' (1975 : 57). Amongst the Jats family status, independence and dominance were most valued but they were impermanent and had to be endlessly competed for. These comments from Pettigrew give the character of the society:

'The aspirations of the Jats were towards military service, large land holding and high administrative position. They were a people with a passion for dominance. More than three quarters of the legislative assembly are now Jats, of the nine Sikhs representing Punjab in Delhi eight are Jat. Of the nine Sikhs who were ministers before the general elections of 1967 seven were Jat, of the six Sikhs who were secretaries to the government of the Punjab at the same time five were Jat. Jats also dominated in the Sikh percentage of the officer class of the Indian army' (My underlining) (Pettigrew 1975 : 42).

In Jat society ... 'to be equal means to be independent and independence means having one's freedom within one's own area. If one does not have such independence one is less than equal and does not share in the equality which other men

possess. One has therefore been insulted ... hence lowered. A man's equality thus depends on his reputation not to be "subject to insult" (Pettigrew 1975 : 18-19).

'Leadership and political position, implying as they do more power for a man, also imply that the abilities and achievements of other families have been excelled and thereby that the families have been insulted and dishonoured. If they allow this situation to continue and do not attempt to regain their honour by opposition they lose reputation and prestige. The opposition and competition that ensues thus brings about in reality the equality that people subscribe to' (Pettigrew 1975 : 45).

'All Jats alike are brought up to be proud irrespective of what they possess in terms of wealth, education or power' (Pettigrew 1975 : 20).

Amongst the Jats family background was not particularly important and there was no set hierarchy among Jat families. It was a society in which a family's position was changeable and in which competition and status were based on present differences, any Jat family might accumulate land and status and there were no traditional inheritors. Amongst themselves they were believers in equality of opportunity:

'Equality of opportunity applies not only to property accumulation but also to education and all have equal access to the various occupations. Thus if an individual works hard and makes money and skillfully creates a set of links he can become a person of importance. Achieved status is what is important' (Pettigrew 1972 : 354).

#### The importance of education according to the English-Punjabis

The English-Punjabis fully realised that education was particularly important for them. They had been in England long enough for their parents to expect them to do well at school and they knew from them what it meant to be educated in Punjabi society. They knew how education counted just like land:

'Some parents they got just one aim in life, to educate their children so they can make up what they haven't got in land or anything like that.'

And the status attached to education:

'If somebody in the family was educated that brought prestige, everybody came to them, that person, to read their letters and write and from then on everybody decided that they must have at least one person in the family who's educated, so all the time they're trying hard to get somebody in the family who's good in education.'

And the respect:

'They just believe that if you're more educated you're a better person.' ..... 'Some of the Indians have been educated right and they've got a higher status right so they're respected more and the ones who aren't educated respect the ones who are.'

And how, in India, education was one way a man could get a suitable job away from the village and the land:

'You get a job if you're educated, otherwise you work on the farm or something.' ..... 'Indian parents sort of egg you on especially with education. They know that with education you can get a job. That's mainly because in India you know the only people who can get jobs are the educated people. Otherwise you just do what your mother and father did and that's it.'

Once a family had migrated to England and the youngest had started school, education was likely to be even more important than in India.

In Doaba most children had a background of the farm, the caste and the village and education was one of a number of alternatives (farming being the most obvious one for a Jat). In Coventry on the other hand the children lived in the worst part of a city and they were part of a new and insecure minority with very low social status in a society in which education was free and compulsory. In such a situation their clear priority was to educate themselves just as the priority for their parents had been to work and earn money. Also, in Coventry, the obvious alternative to a good education was not farming but the worst sort of factory work. This was the work the fathers knew about and they were well qualified to point out what would happen to their sons if they did not do well at school:

'They tell you you'll be like me, like labour.' ..... 'My

dad's a factory worker he's had it hard. He don't talk so much now because I accept it. I remember going into Dunlop factory once with a party from school and we went in and there was an Indian chap there, you know, and I vaguely knew him, but no relation or anything and he was working away and he says to me, "Come here son," and he says, "look what I'm doing," and he says, and he had greasy hands you know and he was lifting heavy things and he says, "you don't want to ... you've got to study because otherwise you'll end up in a place like this as well." He actually said that. I mean I didn't even know him.'

It was easy for parents to put pressure on their children by telling them about the hard times and the lack of opportunities that they had had to face. They had obviously done a lot for the family by coming to England and by working in the factories and saving money and they had not had the same chance to educate themselves. Now it was up to their children.

'It was their duty to educate.' ..... 'They come to this country right, they can't sort of let their parents down, they sort of got to live up to their name.' ..... 'They got to continue the same effort.' ..... 'People who want to educate themselves they can't afford it (in India) then they're really disgusted and some of the people who come here they tell their children that... They were in such difficulty that they couldn't afford and they really wanted them to be educated and they themselves wanted to be educated but they couldn't because you know... the circumstances.' ..... 'Indian parents think about their hardship what they've done when they've come to this country what sort of work did they do and they try you know tell us about it, "It's hard work what we're doing for you lot", and all that stuff and they would like us not to do the same sort of job.' ..... 'When parents came they wanted the money they couldn't survive by doing an apprenticeship or anything like that.'

Some sons were a little sceptical about their fathers' devotion to education:

'Farmers think education is a load of trash. They want their sons to be big professors but they're farmers themselves. My dad's bothered for us but not himself see. They're bothered for their children but they can't do anything about it themselves. They must realise we think the same like.'  
..... 'They haven't been educated so they think it must be good.'



The English-Punjabis I knew were in a special position because they were the first generation of Punjabis to be brought up in England. This meant that they were the first Punjabis in England to have had a real chance 'to educate' and they were still close to the initial effort the family had made to migrate and earn money. They understood and sympathised with the reasons that had brought the family here. Many shared the commitment to the Punjab and they realised that they had to have something to show if they went back.

'People come to this country to get some money, buy a bigger farm and live a better life.' ..... 'Most Indian families in this country have an ambition to save up money to build up a better home in India and that's one reason why they work so hard.' ..... 'They realise they got to get back to their own country and they got to have good jobs to back them up.' ..... 'My future's not in this country. I am going to go back to India and do something there. If I study a lot, if I get high grades it's worth a high value.' ..... 'You see you're ambitious to succeed because you're the first generation here.'

Education played a big part in the comparison and competition between families and sons were left in no doubt that it was something to be proud of:

'Parents say, "I want you to do well in work. When I talk of you to other people I can say, 'oh my son's got a degree"', and that sort of jazz so he gain a lot of respect.' ..... 'Every family here they're trying to get on top of one another.' ..... 'If we are sitting together in the family and some relations come, well parents would pick me out and they'd say "my child is doing this, he's doing 'A' levels and he'll probably pass, he's doing something else he's doing an apprentice", that's what they say.' ..... 'I've got a cousin in India, he's just done his B.Sc. engineering. I wrote him a letter and he wrote back to me after I done C.S.E. and he told me "I would like to see you as a big man as well."' ..... 'They can show you off to their friends, "he's my son he's great he's got so many certificates".' ..... 'If you have an argument with your parents right they won't stick to the same topic they'll change it something like this. "Well why can't you do the same thing as old Tom, Dick and Harry does down there. He's got 'A' levels, why can't you?" That's the sort of thing they'll put forward to you. They'll go completely off the subject, they just want to show you up you know.' .....

'They might not boast about it (their son's success) but you know you get other people you know talking about it. "Oh his son's a doctor, oh his son's a lawyer," you know and they're very proud of themselves, their family is you know. He's made it.' ..... 'Relations come to your house they have a chat with your parents and they say "my son's doing a degree" and all that and then the other Punjabis say "my son's doing a degree as well". They don't want their sons to be lower down.'

Most parents expected their sons to do as well as any other Punjabi, particularly any other relative, and their high (and in some cases unrealistic) expectations added to the pressure.

'Indian parents they overestimate you, they don't know how brainy you are.' ..... 'They think that everyone's the same and the only reason you don't get along is because you're not working hard.'

#### The jobs that parents wanted their sons to do

Whilst all the various qualifications and certificates that went with education were something to be proud of it was still the job at the end that mattered most. I have already described the jobs that Jats aimed for in India (doctor, lawyer, administrator, officer) and of these the job of doctor stood out as the best job their sons could get in England. One great advantage of being a doctor was that you were not dependent on English society and other people were dependent on you; there were many other advantages:

'They earn a lot of money.' ..... 'People go to him (the doctor).' ..... 'Everybody look on to you.' ..... 'It brings social prestige.' ..... 'Parents think they're respected that's why they all want it.' ..... 'If they go back to India they can get a good job and earn good money.' ..... 'It gets more respect they think a doctor is a much cleaner job and they think you can go into any country and be a doctor.' ..... 'If you become a doctor you got a job, nobody can do without you.' ..... 'You can go for a world tour after getting the degree. That's what most doctors do, that's why Indian families think a lot of them. See there's about two or three doctors come to our house and they're doing tours.' ..... 'In India doctor is considered as your sole benefactor in say you know diseases and everything. I mean he's the one who saves your life and everything so being a doctor is a great thing.'

And as with all the best things, the marriage prospects were good:

'Thing is if you're a doctor say and when you're about twenty-five, twenty-six and it's time to get married one of the main determining factors in the outcome of marriage is your job and if you're say a doctor then it's like a magnet attracting nails. I mean the girl's parents will obviously just come and say right well so and so he's highly skilled and our daughter got quite a security for the future. On the other hand if you've got some foundry worker it doesn't seem so attractive.'

The doctor was also a well known person. It was important that for all Punjabis the doctor was 'part of their everyday life'. Parents could see for themselves all the advantages of being a doctor and most people were impressed by doctors and sometimes had to rely on them.

'Almost everyone visits a doctor once or twice in their life-time and parents think oh well this job must be good. It's a sort of benefactor to the humankind and when they find out more about the financial side of things they sort of decide, "well my son it must be this".'

As far as parents could see the doctor had a good life and his work was not too hard (they had foundry work as a guide):

'It looks easy because you know doctor sitting in the office ... you go to the surgery you see him there just write a prescription and then he has to visit someone his car standing there he just goes off. It looks easy.' ..... 'I wouldn't mind being behind one of them desks. It's a clean job.' ..... 'Just sit down write the prescriptions down.' ..... 'They (parents) think you just go to college and they teach you everything.' ..... 'Doctor's got to stay in his surgery and you come to check like this and he got good wages.'

Not surprisingly:

'Doctor, doctor, doctor gets knocked into your head.'

To be an engineer was almost as good as being a doctor, engineers were respected and their jobs were secure, well paid and could be done in any country.

'My parents say be an engineer so I can go to any country in the world you know. They think I can get a job anywhere if I be an engineer. They think go to Canada, go to India and get a job anywhere.'

But there was a disadvantage in that the engineer was not so familiar as the doctor:

'They don't go to the engineer to get their teapots made all they need is the shops, you see, so all they go to is a shop and buy one whereas they got to go to a doctor to get themselves cured so it brings them closer together. I mean doctor, lawyer and stuff they're the highest people they ever get to see.'

Parents were not so keen on their sons doing things like chemistry or even electronics which were more obscure and did not mean anything to them or their fellow Punjabis. One boy at Frederick Bird school was very interested in electronics and astronomy but he had to be very careful with the magazines he had on the subjects. If his father found them he treated them as if they were pornographic, tearing them up and insisting that his son concentrate on his studies (they at least might get him somewhere useful) and Amerjit, who was doing 'A' levels, had run into trouble with his father because he had chosen to do electronics instead of medicine.

'My father wanted me to leave at the end of the fourth year. It was mainly the rest of the relations that egged me on and kept him from stopping me. He just didn't understand what I was doing, he'd wanted me to be a doctor. I told him I hadn't taken up the doctor's course, by the end of the fourth year I'd got interested in other things.'

Amerjit was both clever and studious and his father's attitude was exceptional. Most parents were less ignorant and were pleased if their sons were doing well at school and had more faith in them doing the right thing. In the end Amerjit got to university and that might have pleased even his father.

The parents presented something of a solid front as far as education was concerned and like a chorus they stressed its importance; but they had very little to do with education themselves. They had not got much out of school in India and they had little to do with English schools. Their very positive attitudes were based on what their relatives and other Punjabis had achieved thanks to education.

It was the sons who actually had to go to school and be educated and their attitudes and reactions differed. On the whole they could see that education was important, they had a respect for school and for learning and knowledge and they knew it paid to study and to do well at school. Not only did they have all the talk from their parents and relatives to help them but they could see it well enough for themselves. They did not like the idea of doing a hard job at the lowest level any more than anyone else would have done and they knew that that is what faced them if they failed at school:

'Foreign people they got to get somewhere high to get a decent job. I mean if they haven't got a good education in this country ... well they'll get labouring jobs.'

They knew they were handicapped in their competition with the whites and that unless they were better on paper they did not stand much chance:

'Say if me and another English boy went for the same job I think he'll have more chance of getting it because he's white.'

One of the English-Punjabis who had willingly left school when he was old enough and who was strong and well-built and had, as he said, 'faced it' by working in the foundries, pressed his younger brother to stay at school and had second thoughts about education for himself. 'Doing hard work is a hard life.' He thought he would have had it easier if he had taken school more seriously and not rushed off to work.

Like their parents most sons were proud and ready to compete and this kept them going at school. They were not going to let themselves and their parents down, as long as education mattered to other Punjabis then it mattered to them. 'You've got to be proud you know you've got to say I should do better than them'. That meant better than other Punjabis and better than the whites.

Whilst they could all see the importance of education, there were plenty of English-Punjabis who did not like the book work, the

study and some of the conditions at school. Many were realistic about their own ability or interest and could see that they were never going to get very far through studying, certainly not to the level of doctor or anything like that, and they wanted to leave as soon as they could find a suitable job, which usually meant a job with prospects. A few did not even want that much. Having ended up in the B stream they saw they had no future in education and they were happy to leave school and to start work, any work.

'I never interested ... always in the lower class.' ..... 'We don't want educated.' ..... 'At our age we want to enjoy ourselves more than anything else. We shouldn't really be bothered about education.' ..... 'Take a person who's always swotting he ain't getting nothing, he ain't enjoying nothing and he thinks he's happy. He thinks he's happy but he's not really happy.'

#### What was the point of going to school?

This was a question I discussed with most members of the set and they were almost united in their answers. Liking or not liking school or study were to a large extent irrelevant. School was not there for people to like but for people to better themselves; for qualifications and a better job:

'The point of going to school is to educate yourself to get a better job so you have a better life.'

And you educated yourself by learning and by acquiring knowledge. Facts: maths., science, English, history, geography, etc. Facts like how to solve an equation, how an engine works, how to speak and write properly, what happened in the reign of Richard III, and the size, population and main towns of Brazil ... And if you showed you knew the facts then you got a qualification and if you got a qualification you got a better job. Quite simple and quite fair.

Some felt the stigma that was attached to being uneducated and without knowledge and the facts:

'I would say if a person is not educated he is just as good as blind. I mean he don't know anything about the world.' .....

'You're half a man without education.' ..... 'I mean to

communicate to pass in society you got to have a broader knowledge of the things that go on around you.'

But acquiring knowledge was not an end in itself, knowledge led to a better job. As Balbir explained, knowledge was like sugar and the more knowledge you had the sweeter your life was:

'If you put one spoon of sugar in the milk you get it less sweet and if you put three spoon of sugar you get it more, so if you got more knowledge you get a better life.'

A few people saw education and school as providing a better life on their own. 'It's a good skive,' said one, and an odd fact about education was that, like money, the more you had the more you could get. If you did well at school 'you don't have to have a job, you carry on.' One boy worked very hard with this in mind, he went to college on top of school and joked that he hoped he could go on studying until he was thirty and then retire to his farm in India.

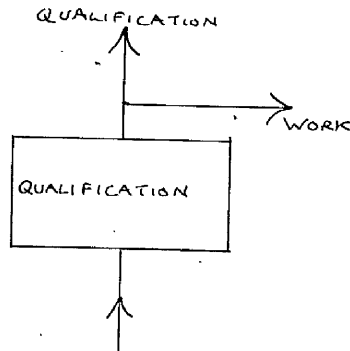
Unfortunately an opposing fact about education was also true and the less you had the less you could get. If you did not do well at school you had no alternative but to get a job and you had very little chance of having anything more to do with education and learning of any sort. One person who was well aware of this explained that he went off to night school after a very hard day's work in an effort just to keep the little knowledge he had acquired at school. And another person was both confused and annoyed by the fact that because he had not learnt much in school he had no chance to learn anything at work. With school and education it seemed to be true that: those with it could get more and those without it certainly could not get more and might lose the little they had<sup>(1)</sup>.

### The educational system

The English-Punjabis understood the educational system to be based on the fact that once a person had got one qualification they always had the choice, either to go on to the next one or to get a job.

'You get 'A' levels and then there are two ways. You can get entry to a good job and you can get entry to University. You know what I mean.'

FIGURE 9: The basic unit of the educational system according to the English-Punjabis



And after each qualification the jobs were better and there was more of a choice:

'I think that once we have got 'O' levels we can be sure of getting a good job you know you can always do better than all these secondary modern pupils (who take C.S.E. <sup>(2)</sup>). You've got 'O' levels haven't you and that's sort of the basis for getting on to a better job.' ..... 'If you decide to leave it at 'A' levels you're obviously a fool if you get good results. But the thing is you got more of (a choice) of jobs open to you than any other person who's done 'O' levels.' ..... 'If you get good results and that you go to the higher ladder. The higher you go the more skilled jobs open to you.' ..... 'I always have the impression that the more education you have the better job you'll get.' ..... 'I mean take a university graduate's obviously going to get a better job than I am. I mean obviously.'

#### Social education

There were just a few people, mainly in the sixth form who thought that schools and education were meant to produce a society in which people lived easily together and were more aware and fulfilled. They thought that schools were or should be concerned with individual development and that the point was to give people the right values and attitudes, the right qualities or even the right manners:

'People have to go to school to get knowledge and manners.' ..... 'Now I don't believe that that sort of education (where you got qualifications etc.) is the greatest thing. I believe that social education is greater, knowing what life is about, knowing what you're here for, being beneficial to your fellow



men and things like that. I don't think it's mainly just to get a job.' ..... 'Education is mainly so that you can get along with your friends, so that you can talk and get along with people.'

One sixth former saw a vast gulf between such ideals of education and their practice in schools:

'What the purpose of education should be and what the purpose of education is you know at the moment in this system is you know totally different. I think the purpose of education should be to turn out decent people who know how to live.'

But along with other English-Punjabis he saw that schools were directed towards better jobs rather than any kind of social education. One group argued about why they came to school:

'We need to come to school to mature before we go out into the world to get a job. School teaches us to grow up.' ..... 'School doesn't make you grow up at all. I think I'd learn more about life if I was working in a factory.' ..... 'You learn much more outside school than you do inside it. That's a basic fact that is.' ..... 'I think the social aspect develops on its own.' ..... 'I'm going to get a decent qualified job.'

That settled it. School was not meant to teach you how to grow up or how to live. You learnt that and you learnt the qualities of life from your parents and friends not from the school.

'Parents can teach you what's wrong with life you know, they can't teach you the actual facts like.'

The 'actual facts' they were up to the school and they led to a better job, but the rest, the rights and wrongs, the values, the attitudes and a person's character well they were rooted outside school, in the individual, the family and in Punjabi society.

It was the teachers who thought more in terms of social education<sup>(3)</sup>:

'I come to school primarily to get my qualifications for a job but when you say that to teachers they always come out with the reply "Well it's not only that is it?" But I think it is. They say there is some hidden meaning of social education.'

The teachers did not want to devalue education, they had been successful and having already obtained good qualifications and jobs

they had a different perspective on school. For the same reasons it was usually only those in the sixth form, being well on their way to college and better jobs, who saw school more in terms of individual development.

What was a better job?

English-Punjabis had the same idea of a good job as their parents, they agreed that a doctor had a good job but most of them did not want to be one themselves. When they talked of a better job, what they usually had in mind was a job with similar characteristics to that of the doctor but one which was more within their range of interest and ability.

A better job? ...

'Could be like not working with your hands something like being in an office you know going to promotion you know straight up.' ..... 'Look at all the factors involved: there's the pay you get and the type of work you do, manual work or whether it's skilled work you know using your brain and er whether you actually take orders or you can give orders.' ..... 'Future prospects, what lies ahead. Have you got any chance of changing further on. I mean any chance of promotion going on to an alternative.' ..... 'Whether it offers a challenge I reckon.' ..... 'It's just contribution to society.' ..... 'I think better job is where you cannot be pushed out, like a secure job. Doctors they can't be pushed out.' ..... 'Cleaner job is a good job.' ..... 'A job with social status.' ..... 'Something you can enjoy and make money.' ..... 'A job in which you're happy.' ..... 'If you like doing it and you can do it.' ..... 'It usually leads to higher when you get older these jobs.' ..... 'It's a job you can look forward to.' ..... 'Respect is one of the reasons it's a better job.' ..... 'More money, clean, more opportunity.' ..... 'Good sports facilities, short hours, easy work, more pay.' ..... 'In the better job you can have people below you who are not so qualified.' ..... 'Money, whether you're being told or whether you're telling.' ..... 'The pay, social standing, happiness.' ..... 'It's how important you are to the community. If you see your doctor going by you would say, "Oh he's saving my life", but if you see your dustman going by you'll only say "he's taking away your rubbish".' ..... 'A better job is a job that would satisfy me and that I could stick to for the rest of my life no

matter what the money is.' ..... 'Depends on what the finance is, what they pay you for how many hours.' ..... 'If it's clean and easy job that would be better job than a dirty hard work.' ..... 'I suppose some jobs have a higher respect. The person who's doing it people have a higher respect for him.' ..... 'You don't take any orders.' ..... 'You usually do office jobs.'

A doctor's job fits in with these comments very well and a quarter of those in the sixth form (the ones who could reasonably expect to get that far) did want to be doctors. The rest did not like the idea; they had other interests and were attracted by other jobs:

'I shouldn't think doctor likes it very much seeing people all the time and he doesn't get much spare time I tell you.'

And the English-Punjabis at secondary modern schools, realising they were not likely to get the qualifications they needed to be a doctor, thought in terms of other jobs which they thought were almost as good:

'A doctor does count for something but you can get a job elsewhere and not be a doctor and still be respected by your family. Look if my old man wants me to be a doctor he'd just tell me why don't you try this, that and the other, and try and become a doctor, that's a very highly paid job and all that jazz. He doesn't want me to be that. Instead I can still get a job at the post office, be a technician and still be respected by the family or I can get a job in some laboratory.' ..... 'I don't like being a doctor, say I'm a supervisor or something like that. I mean that's not worse than being a doctor is it?' ..... 'If you have another kind of job you know toolmaker or something like that it's all right because you can still travel round the world because you know other countries will have jobs like that as well so it doesn't really matter which job you have so long as it's skilled you can travel the world.'

#### Sciences vs Humanities

With very few exceptions the jobs that English-Punjabis were aiming for were on the technical and scientific side. These jobs fitted their functional attitude to education and the technical and scientific subjects were better for them because they were not rooted

in English society. The arts and humanities had a cultural bias and most English-Punjabis felt they were not English - or white - enough to take advantage of the opportunities they offered.

'I tended a lot towards the art side before the third year. I used to like geography and history you know but from the fourth year onwards I was converted like you know. I realised the arts didn't have much to offer.'

Subjects on the humanities side often lead to management, but what chance did a Punjabi have of being a manager in England?

'Even though I was good at English in the lower part of the school (winning prizes) I soon realised it wasn't much use you know; that if I wanted to achieve something it would have to be on the science side. I mean for instance if you study arts at university what sort of jobs are you able to do? You might try managing, administrative jobs whereas these aren't available to us you know. I soon realised that if I studied arts subjects then the job opportunities available to me weren't very useful because I wouldn't be able to do these sort of jobs. I wouldn't be offered a job in England for managing people because of the race business. I realised that very early.'

What about work in an office? It was all right if it was your office:

'An office gives you responsibility. An office makes you more important because you got somewhere, something that is allocated to you.'

What about a machine? What if you had your own machine?

'You can't order it to work.' ..... 'You haven't got your name stamped on the machine like you have on the door.' ..... 'You can't make the machine work but you can tell a secretary to type your letter.' ..... 'In an office you're the manager, you don't take nobody's orders.' ..... 'You tell the secretary to do it, all the work like. You got easy job.' ..... (The manager) 'he's clean, he's respected, he's reached the top you know. Not everybody can be a manager. He's worked himself up, he's respected ain't he.'

An office was all right if you were the manager and it was your office otherwise there was nothing particularly good about office work. You might be better off in a factory:

'Supposing you're just an office boy, it's better to get an apprenticeship.' ..... (If you were doing a menial job), 'you're still doing the same routine like that and you might get more money in the factory. In the office you're still routine you're not doing what you really want to do. You're just filing papers and making notes.' ..... An office? 'Sometimes but not all the time. If you get the right one where you're sort of in charge you know what I mean. But if you're going to be like these clerks who write for a week for age 25-60 and they send them off with a gold watch, know what I mean, that's worse than a factory.' ..... 'I would like to work in an office, who wouldn't? I mean you sit there in a suit and you just keep writing on bits of paper, I mean that's better than just slaving out in a factory, obvious it is isn't it?' ..... 'It's boring.' ..... 'Well it's a clean job. It's not a physical hardship is it?' ..... 'There are girls there.' ..... 'I wouldn't work in an office. It's not active enough just sitting down all day, just lazing about writing. All right nice clean job so what I don't like it. Too posh.'

### An apprenticeship

If you were at secondary modern school generally the best work you could get after school was as an apprentice. Because there was an age limit attached it was usually better to take an apprenticeship when you could rather than to carry on at school or college and risk ending up no better qualified and too old for an apprenticeship.

What was so good about an apprenticeship?

'You can work as skilled and in the end you can open your own business and earn some money.' ..... 'You got a trade for a lifetime really.' ..... 'You got promotion, the chairman of the G.P.O. started as an apprentice technician.' ..... 'In apprenticeship your contact with education continues.' ..... 'Well I'll be learning something, it's just like education but instead of school you're in a factory.' ..... 'Once you become skilled you got a secure job.' ..... 'You got the future.' ..... 'You can go to any country and they know you're skilled you got a job.' ..... 'More variety as an apprentice.' ..... 'After you finished your apprentice you get more money.' ..... 'You got security for the first four years.' ..... 'Make you good for your life.' ..... 'You're sure of your money.' ..... 'You can branch out on your own afterwards.' ..... 'You got a job, you can even open your own business.'

A trade and a skill marked you out and gave you something

special:

'If you got an apprenticeship or anything like that you're a skilled person, people will want you because you're good at something. You're the man for it.' ..... 'Once you've been trained then you become that person you've been trained for see. If you've been trained to be an electrician, that's it you're an electrician therefore wherever you go you'll get a job in electrician because every part of the world there is something to do with electricity. This means wherever you go you got a job.'

An electrician had the best of trades. His work was not too dirty and like a doctor he was a public and useful man:

'He got more of a chance of getting a job. People need electricity and in the house they got plugs and everything like that.'

Another good trade was motor mechanic:

'You can't be out of work you know. Lot of people are buying cars now and you can't be out of work, you can open your own thing and do work at home once you've learnt it.'

This was the good thing about both the electrician and the motor mechanic they had the chance to work independently, they could start up their own business or go to other countries and they were not confined to the factory and dependent on machines to the same extent as say the toolmaker or fitter.

#### Semi-skilled and routine work

For anyone at a secondary modern school semi-skilled work was the most likely alternative to an apprenticeship. There were no English-Punjabis who would have chosen such work and I asked them if they could see any advantages to working at this level:

'You can enjoy yourself, you can keep on moving around.'  
..... 'You can get more money at an early age.'  
'You got no worries, you don't have to think of the job at all and what you're doing in the factory 'cause there is no responsibility at all. With a higher paid job you got more responsibility and then you got more worry at home.'

Semi-skilled workers usually changed jobs and moved around and in a sense they were free and they were good for anything, but to

most English-Punjabis that was the same as being good for nothing. Like that you had nothing to show for yourself (except perhaps your strength), you did not possess a trade:

'You're losing your individuality just working there. Losing your brain.' ..... 'No future.' ..... 'Boredom.' .....  
'Same thing every day.' ..... 'Quick method of money.'  
..... (But) 'Not enough money when you got a family.'  
..... 'I mean where do you go from there?' ..... 'You don't need any brains.' ..... 'It's hard work.' ..... 'They forget about what they learnt at school.'

An apprenticeship was better; with semi-skilled work:

'there's no chance of getting higher pay unless you work harder and do overtime, whereas if you take an apprenticeship you've always got a chance of going higher up.' .....  
'We (apprentices) don't have to work so hard. When you're in apprenticeship first you don't have to work, you study the machine.' ..... 'Apprenticeship, it's a trade for a lifetime really. The other people that you know they just leave in the fourth year they just go and pick any job that comes their way and sooner or later that factory might close down and they got to look for another job and they won't be skilled at most things like us and have a job for themselves so they'll just have to walk around everywhere.' ..... The people doing apprenticeship .. 'they have easier life, something different to do every time, some control over their work. Those that do semi-skilled they haven't got any control. They just do what they're told.' ..... 'The thing is with the semi-skilled bloke when he gets older he won't be able to handle that job will he. What happens then? In the case of the apprentice he's got the skill, he's sort of secure in that position, he knows what he is doing. If he's taken an apprenticeship, he's got something to show for it.'

#### Better and worse jobs

The English-Punjabis knew about semi-skilled work in factories because that was the work done by most parents and most Punjabis. Such knowledge was a useful guide and a useful incentive. They were as clear about what they meant by a better job as they were about what the worst jobs were. The two were directly opposed and they were as much repelled by the worst as they were attracted by the best.

Worse

Better

'Dirty'	'Not working with your hands....'
	'Cleaner....'
'Quick method of money....'	'How important you are....'
'Where do you go from there?'	'More money....'
	'More opportunity....'
'It's hard work....'	'A higher respect....'
'When he gets older he won't be able to handle that job.'	'It's not a physical hardship....'
'Keep on moving around....'	'You got promotion....'
	'You got a secure job....'
	'You're a skilled person....'
	'You're the man for it....'
	'It offers a challenge....'
'Same thing every day....'	'Something different to do....'
'Haven't got any control....'	'Some control....'
	'You study the machine....'
'Forget what they learnt....'	'Learning something....'
'You don't need any brains....'	'Contact with education....'
	'Go to any country....'
	'Your own business....'
'You're being told....'	'You don't take nobody's orders..'
'No future....'	'You got the future....'

In discussing work with teachers, careers officers and employers I often found that they were reluctant to say that one job was better than another. Rather in the way that school had been described by more privileged people as being primarily concerned with individual development, so better jobs were described as being those that suited the individual. They could not generalise; routine work might suit some people and not others, some people were better off working with their hands, others with their brains, some liked and could take responsibilities, others could not. It was as bad to demand too much of people as it was to demand too little. They looked at the whole range of work available and saw that there were different jobs just like there were different people and that the problem was to get the right people to fit the right jobs. Each job suited someone and everyone had a contribution to make. In their opinion - and in their position - individual considerations were most important and it was not for them to judge one job better than another.



The English-Punjabis had no such difficulty. They did not ignore personal satisfaction:

(A better job) ... 'It's a job you can look forward to' .....  
'A job in which you're happy.' ..... 'If you like doing it,  
then it's a better job.' ..... 'If you like doing it and you  
can do it.' ..... 'It's a job that would satisfy me and that I  
could stick to for the rest of my life.'

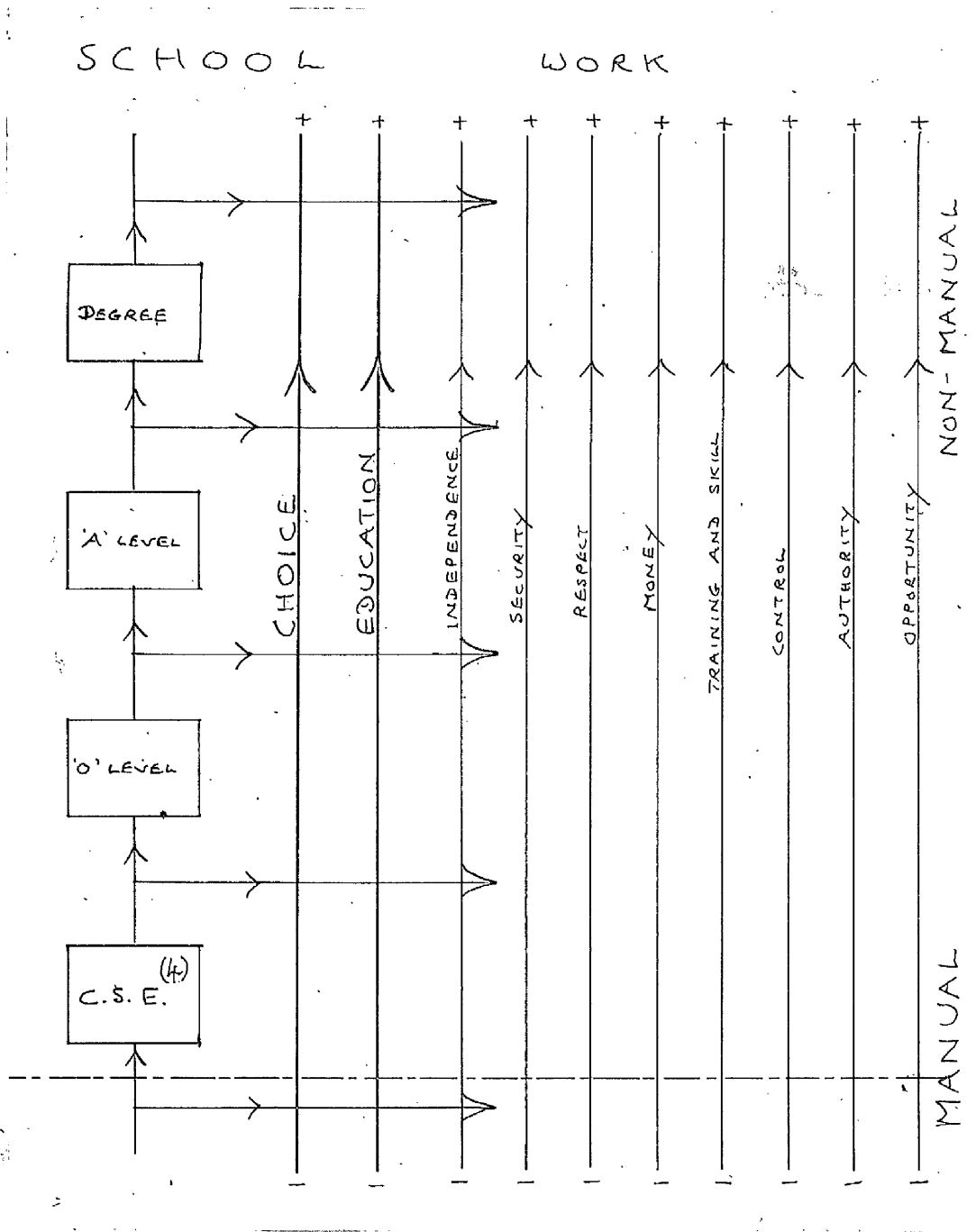
But they were not confused by such considerations, personal satisfaction was simply not so important when faced, as they were, with the work their parents did and they would have to do if they left school without qualifications. It made no sense to them to speak of semi-skilled work as suitable or good for anyone. In their position they knew very well which were the better jobs.

### Conclusion

The attitudes that I have described in this chapter give a picture of school and work like the one below (Figure 10).

Anyone who left school before they took an exam (C.S.E.) did 'negative' work, the very opposite of what was aimed for and those who stayed on and got degrees did the positive work, the work they were aiming for. In so far as they faced the worst education and work but they aimed for the best, the English-Punjabis were unique.

FIGURE 10: School and work according to the English-Punjabis



NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

- (1) The full quote is:

'For to him who has will more be given and from him  
who has not even what he has will be taken away.'  
(St. Mark 4 : 25).

- (2) C.S.E. is the Certificate of Secondary Education.
- (3) This statement is backed up by the results of a Schools Council survey which showed that as far as teachers were concerned the main objectives of education in school were connected with personal development but as far as young school leavers were concerned they were connected with work (Schools Council 1968 : 33-45).
- (4) Because of the transitional state of education in Coventry (see Chapter Five) anyone who had taken C.S.E. at a secondary modern school usually had to take 'O' levels the following year if they wanted to carry on with education, thus 'O' level was the stage after C.S.E.

CHAPTER FIVE  
TWO SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOLS AND A NEW SYSTEM  
OF EDUCATION

Introduction

The English-Punjabis went to the schools in Hillfields and Foleshill, arriving at a time when changes were being made in the educational system which were ideally suited to them, for they came when a limited educational system was being gradually replaced by an educational system based on equality of opportunity.

In this chapter I describe this change in the educational system and show how it, and the arrival of the English-Punjabis, affected the two local secondary modern schools, Broad Heath and Frederick Bird. The English-Punjabis were as much wedded to the new educational system as the schools were to the old and their arrival brought a good deal of confusion. In such schools it seemed both wrong and laughable that children should aim to be doctors or that anyone, particularly in the lower streams, should push to stay on at school and to carry on with their education.

The secondary modern school

When they were introduced after the war the secondary modern schools became the latest in a long line of limited working class schools; board, elementary, senior, secondary modern, all provided working class children with a basic education that finished at the minimum leaving age and which led to manual work.

The education in secondary modern schools was meant to be practical and relevant. The schools were to be free of the constraints of external examinations. Thus:

'The aim of the secondary modern school is to provide a good all round secondary education not focused primarily on the traditional subjects of the school curriculum but developing out of the interests of the children..... Freedom and flexibility are its essence and indeed its great opportunity'  
(My underlining) (M.O.E. 1947 : 29-30).

But such an aim had no foundation. Those who talked of the secondary modern school in this way were far more likely to favour the examinations and traditions of the grammar and public schools for their children; and those who were confined to secondary modern schools were not likely to be impressed by the opportunities offered by a more experimental type of education.

In practice the secondary modern schools carried on where the senior schools left off; they continued the old elementary tradition of providing an education terminating at the minimum leaving age for pupils who were judged unlikely to profit from a longer one. In the Crowther report it was noted that:

'the modern schools as a whole are the most homogeneous element among English schools, the children of non-manual workers are much under represented and the children of semi-skilled workers over represented' (My underlining) (Crowther 1954 : Vol I 74).

Their facilities and the money spent on secondary modern schools gave the final lie to their so-called great opportunity to present a new type of education. The estimate around 1960 was that, in terms of resources, the average grammar school child received nearly three times as much as the average modern child (Taylor 1963 : 47). The Newsom report which took a sample of secondary modern schools considered that forty per cent must be condemned as seriously inadequate and for inner city schools the percentage was higher (Newsom 1963 : 250-9). In Coventry, in 1956, it was calculated that 'no less than 110 out of 332 classrooms and other teaching spaces used by secondary modern schools were in huts or hostel premises or to put it more simply approximately one third of the pupils attending these schools were in huttled accommodation' (Firth 1960 : 95) and Firth goes on to write that:

'the secondary modern schools have been seriously handicapped by ... deficient facilities, physical separation of annexes and staffing shortages. Far too many of these schools are housed in old, badly arranged and cramped buildings but

the most glaring deficiencies in the available facilities are gymnasia, science laboratories and specialist rooms for art and music. The erection of huts has inevitably reduced the already limited playground space and in some cases the playing fields are situated a considerable distance from the schools' (Firth 1960 : 98).

If the opportunities in modern schools were bad the opportunities after school were worse. A survey in 1955 showed that approximately 90% of juvenile labourers came from modern schools and in general nearly all the full-time students and boys with 'A' level passes in G.C.E. who were likely to make up the professional and managerial groups in later life came from the grammar schools and nearly all the boys who were not undergoing training at the age of eighteen or who were labourers came from secondary modern schools (Taylor 1963 : 61).

In 1959 of the boys who left modern school

0.3% were full-time students

37.2% were undergoing three or more years training in employment

7.3% were undergoing training of less than three years

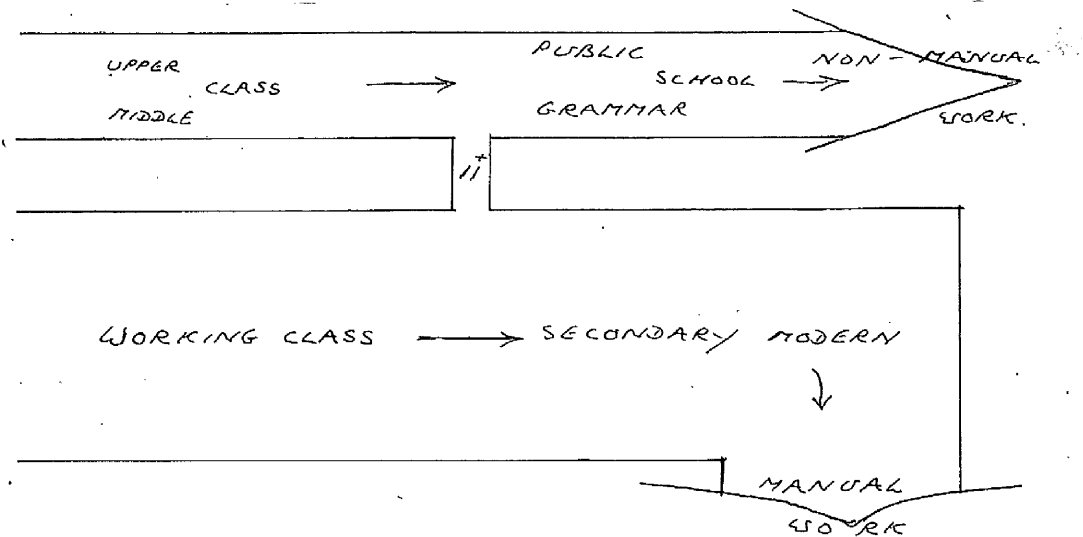
55% were employed but not undergoing training (Taylor 1963 : 62).

#### The old educational system

The secondary modern was part of a clearly stratified educational system which was in keeping with a clearly stratified society; there were separate schools for different classes and different types of work. The upper and middle class went mostly to grammar and public schools to become non-manual workers and the working class went mostly to secondary modern schools to become manual workers. Under this system, in the lowest strata of the working class and secondary modern 'the jobs people do and the status they hold owe little to their education' and 'it is natural for children as they grow older to regard school as a brief prelude to work rather than an avenue

to future opportunities' (Plowden 1967 : 50).

FIGURE 11: The old educational system



Clearly the 'great opportunity' of the secondary moderns never materialised. From the start the only freedom they had was a freedom from exams and it was soon realised that this amounted to a denial of opportunity. The secondary modern schools wanted the freedom to choose and to be free to take examinations if they wanted to and it was not long before they had contracted into the examination system. Some schools began to run an extra year's course for 'O' level, in some places local examinations were introduced and during the 1960's C.S.E. was started. By 1968 over 90% of secondary modern schools were running an extra year's course leading up to either 'O' level or C.S.E. Thus over the years the modern school has 'largely repudiated its elementary and general aims in favour of work which enables it to contract into the system of exams, competition and success' (My underlining) (Taylor 1963 : 128). In other words it has contracted into the new system of education based on equality of opportunity.

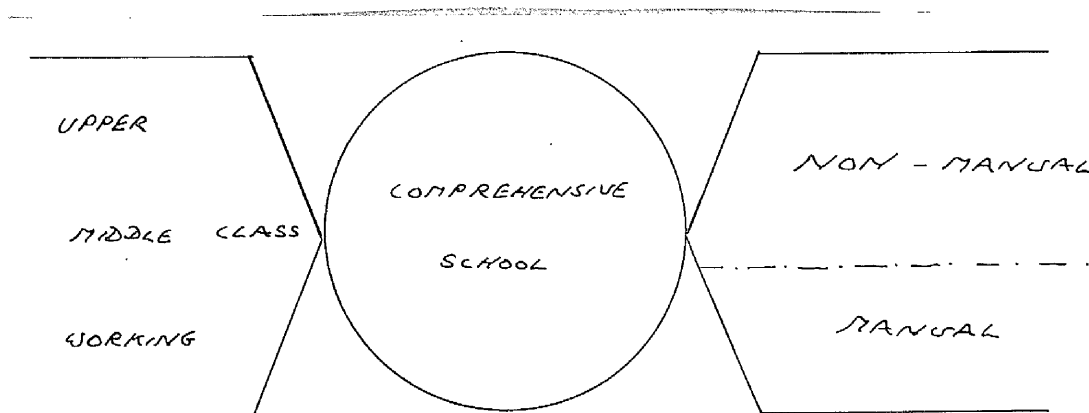
#### The new educational system

Under the old system it had been the intention to promote able working class children and to give them the better opportunities available in secondary and grammar schools, but in many cases (e.g. in

Hillfields and Foleshill) this just did not happen. There were not enough selective places and selection was too haphazard, both the methods of selection and the poor facilities giving many working class children little chance to show their ability.

After the war an increasing number of people realised the injustices and inefficiencies of the old system and they looked towards a new system of education based on equality of opportunity. Surely it would be better if people were sorted out at school rather than before school. Such a new system should lead to fewer people having their ability frustrated by social and educational barriers and to a more efficient society in which a person's ability matched more closely the job he did. It became increasingly difficult to justify the situation in Coventry where most children living in Foleshill whose fathers were manual workers had to go to a school with very poor facilities, had no choice of subjects and no choice when they left school and little choice in the work they did, most going to work like their fathers as manual workers in the engineering industry; a society in which everyone had the right to a good education and the same opportunities at school had to be a more just society. A new and more unified system of education was aimed at which would show up people's abilities independent of their background and then offer them the opportunities after school that matched their ability<sup>(1)</sup>.

FIGURE 12: The new system of education





Frederick Bird and Broad Heath schools, the secondary modern  
schools of Hillfields and Foleshill

The buildings of the two schools studied are monuments to the old limited system of education; solid red-brick buildings set in tarmac playgrounds clearly bounded by walls and fences amidst rows of terraced houses. One of the buildings is single storey with the classrooms round a central hall and the other is two-storey and the classrooms are along one side of a large corridor. In both cases the box-like rooms seem to represent the separate parts of a very compact and definite whole. Both schools have huts which are used as extra classrooms, one school has adjoining playing fields and no gym and the other has a gym but playing fields which are half a mile away.

The schools have records to be proud of. Both were working class schools in a working class city, where manual workers, particularly the craftsmen, have had a special place, for a long time the city has been based on the specialised work of these men and its character and its prosperity rests on them as much as anyone. In the work they have done and in the work, the pay and the conditions they have fought for they have built up a fine tradition, and Broad Heath and Frederick Bird have been their schools and part of that tradition. In the periods immediately before and after the second world war a boy living in either Hillfields or Foleshill could hardly do better than go to either one of the schools and get an apprenticeship.

Frederick Bird school was one of the first schools to have special craft facilities and one of the first to have an advanced class. Something of the 'old school' remains in a pamphlet which gives details about the school. Included are the 'uniform requirements', the motto which is: 'loyalty and service', and the aims: 'the chief aim of the school is to teach children how to live with others and so educate them that on leaving they will be able to find their true place in society and become successful citizens.'

Broad Heath has a quite remarkable record in sport, it still has

an old boys rugby club and in a recent history of the city of Coventry the school merits a whole paragraph to itself:

'Broad Heath, now a secondary modern school, was built early in this century to serve one of the working class districts produced by the bicycle boom. Today it has four houses, each of them named after a front rank sportsman produced by the school. Stan Ashby ran for England in the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, Bobby Lord swam in the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, Jim Stewart played cricket for Warwickshire and Ivor Preece captained the England boys rugby team in 1935 and 1936. He was capped twelve times for England and captained the side in 1948 and 1949. Two others Bert Godwin and Phil Judd played for England in 1963 and 1967 when Judd was captain.' Altogether twenty-two old boys won international rugby caps. 'It is a remarkable record for a school which has never enjoyed many advantages and a lot of it is due to that remarkable sporting headmaster Harold Suddens.' (Richardson 1972 : 338).

But both schools were essentially limited; they were limited in terms of work, education, neighbourhood, background and Broad Heath's great achievements in sport have much to do with its limitations. With no other opportunities available the headmaster and his staff were free to concentrate on sport. The limitations helped to define the schools and to give them a unity, each school had a clear identity and a reputation to maintain. The children were working class with similar backgrounds and expectations and the schools affirmed their background rather than encourage them to look beyond it. Solid as they were the schools stood for solidarity, the children came and left together and streaming enabled children of the same age and ability to be taught together often by the same teacher; the units and the divisions were clear.

#### Decline of the old schools : the coming of the comprehensives

Coventry was one of the first cities to introduce comprehensive education:

'Even before the second world war Coventry was not adequately provided with secondary schools ... (and) the problem (of providing secondary education) was made much more serious

during the war years by the damage sustained by enemy action, whilst the tremendous expansion of the secondary population in the post war period has given rise to a really critical situation during the 1950's. With so much new building essential a wonderful opportunity arose to launch a new venture in education and ... the development plan proposals included a number of comprehensive schools situated on the periphery of the city to eventually cater for the majority of secondary aged pupils.' (My underlining) (Firth 1960 : 109).

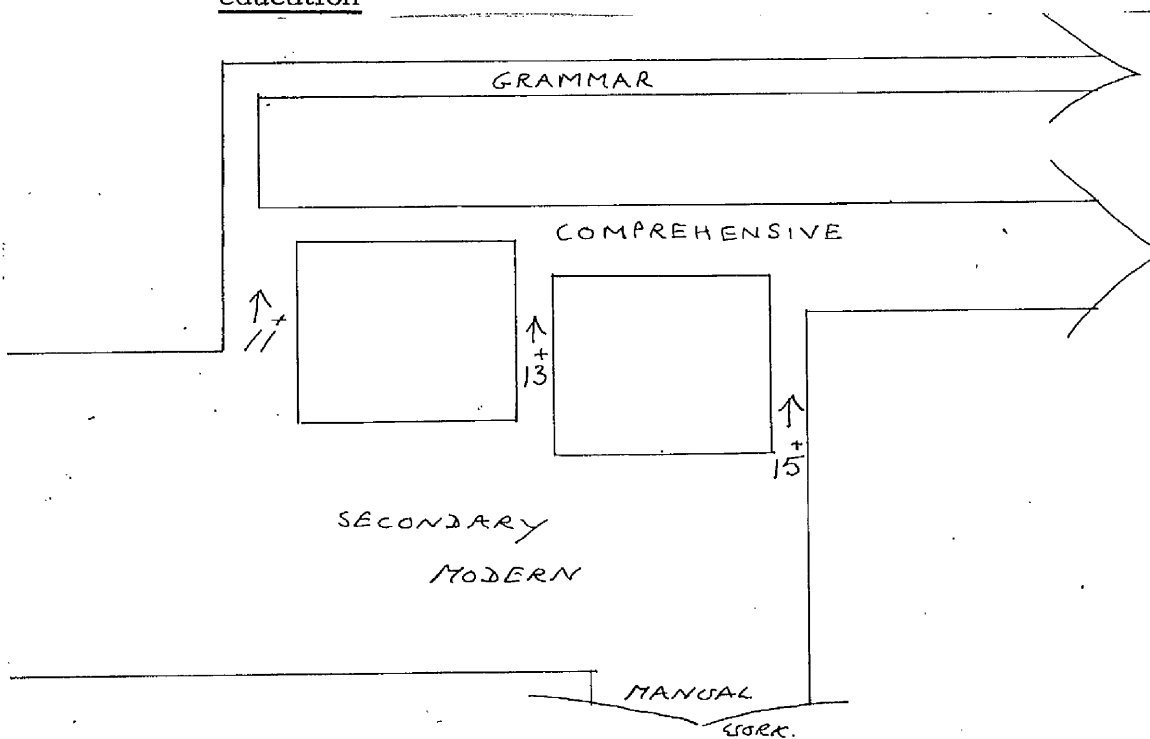
The schools that were built stood for the new system just as Frederick Bird and Broad Heath stood for the old. The buildings were sprawling and complex, light and spacious, and they stood in large green fields and gave the impression of various units joined together. By 1960 five comprehensive schools had been built in the new suburbs in an outer ring surrounding the city and they clearly downgraded the old secondary modern schools. Schools like Frederick Bird and Broad Heath could offer nothing like the same sport and work facilities or the range and choice of subjects and qualifications and they could not allow pupils to stay at school up till eighteen or nineteen.

In terms of increasing opportunities, all that was done for people living in inner city areas, and so still served by secondary moderns, was to increase the number of selective places available by using the comprehensive schools. In areas like Hillfields and Foleshill those who just missed selection to grammar school at 11+ were sent to the new comprehensives and at 13+ and at 15+ (when they had to leave) the most able children at secondary modern schools were allowed to transfer to comprehensive schools. Thus paradoxically, the outer ring of comprehensive schools became the selective schools for the inner ring of secondary moderns.

The comprehensives and the extra selection ('creaming off') made Broad Heath and Frederick Bird very definitely third class (behind the grammar and comprehensive schools) and helped break up their old unity. More local children were creamed off at 11+, and at 13+, just when they had established themselves, the most able

children were again creamed off. In the old system all pupils came at eleven and left at fifteen, children belonged to one school and the best were a credit to themselves and a credit to the school. Now just when the best pupils were showing themselves - and they were often the best in everything, sport included - they were selected for a better school. It was demoralising and made it difficult to build up a good school (or a good rugby team).

FIGURE 13: First transitional stage between old and new systems of education



The coming of qualifications

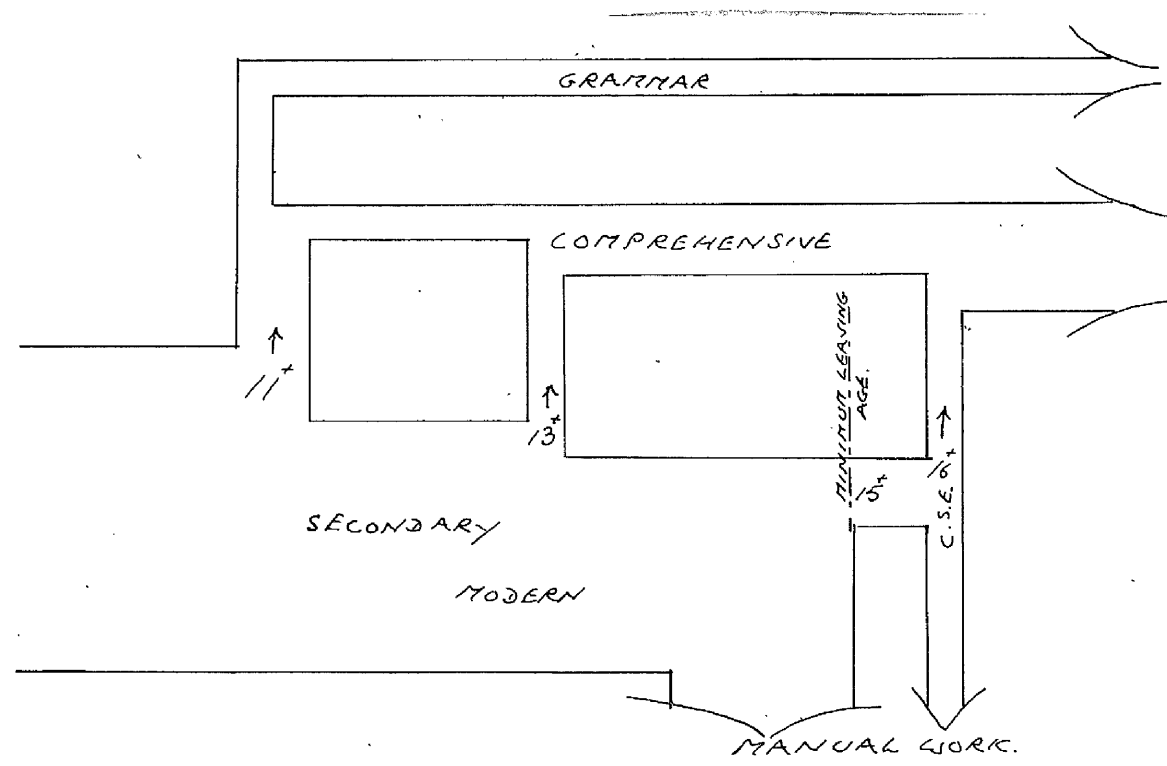
Probably because the schools were so clearly working class and because of the traditions in the city and the abundance of jobs, teaching for external qualifications took a long time to get to Broad Heath and Frederick Bird.

In the mid-1950's the engineering industry backed the introduction of a local 'pre-tech' examination. This was meant to be a bridging examination between school and work and was designed mainly for future apprentices. It gave them something to aim at and introduced them to the sort of work they would have to do later at

college. As far as employers were concerned the 'pre-tech' was a useful indication of ability and interest; it was not a necessary qualification for an apprenticeship but it was a help, and a pass exempted apprentices from their first year of studies. The boys in the top class (or A stream) took pre-tech when they were in their fourth and last year at school.

C.S.E. was introduced in 1966 and it was only then that anyone in Broad Heath and Frederick Bird had the chance to stay at school beyond the minimum leaving age of fifteen. For two years after the introduction of C.S.E. boys could take both exams, pre-tech in the fourth year and then if they wanted to they could stay on for a fifth year to take C.S.E. In 1968 C.S.E. totally replaced the pre-tech with the result that anyone who wanted a qualification had to stay on for an extra year at school. Only the A stream were given the choice of staying on and taking the examination and all those who left at the normal and minimum leaving age of fifteen went without a qualification.

FIGURE 14: Second transitional stage between old and new system of education



The extra year and the qualification were out of keeping with the old school. No longer did everyone leave together at the same age but now there were a select few (from the top class) who could stay on longer than the rest. And rather than a qualification being secondary and something of a bonus in a normal school career, as the pre-tech had been, with C.S.E. the qualification came first and was the sole reason for staying at school.

#### Qualifications and Industry : selection for work

In the past apprentices were not recruited very systematically. School and education were quite important and it helped to have a good school record and to be able to pass a test on maths and English. But there were other ways in apart from school. Some firms liked to keep apprenticeships in the family and they favoured boys who had some connection with the firm; others liked to back their own judgement and go on what they could see for themselves, relying on interviews or picking their apprentices from the boys already working with the firm. Some firms did not bother with apprenticeships and such formal training:

'In the Midlands the tradition has been that of the 'shop boy' or improver who picked up what he could as he went along, getting only the changes of experience he could arrange for himself, having no planned training but in many cases acquiring skilled status and rates' (Beveridge 1963 : 22-3).

These processes of selection and training were too hit and miss for modern industry and in the 1950's and 1960's there were wide-spread moves to make them more rational and efficient. In a big firm there are a vast number of different jobs organised in different departments and at different levels (e.g. upper/lower shop floor; upper/lower office; upper/lower management) and once a man has joined such a firm it was seen to be in everyone's interests to have him properly trained and working at the right level as soon as possible.

Two things were clear:

1) That it was wasteful to select and train people for the wrong level of work.

Given that all people were suited to a particular level of work it would be better for them and for the firm if they started work at their proper level. The aim should be 'to select and place new entrants more accurately' (Wellens 1963 : 19) and to reduce the chopping and changing between levels. If firms could select and train for a certain level of work, rather than have men working their way up or improving, they could cut down the number of people who were doing work for which they were not properly trained and so increase efficiency.

Of course once there was less changing about then it became all the more important for people to be working at their right level. To have people working above or below their proper level could result in either incompetence or dissatisfaction. Therefore in their selection employers had to take care to get their standards just right, neither too high nor too low. The advice was: 'when there is an excess of applicants over places beware of raising your standards' (Beveridge 1963 : 33). If standards were raised there was a danger that firms might take on as craft apprentices men who should properly be working at a higher level and ...

'to train them as craftsmen and deny them any chance of advancement to levels suitable to their abilities is to run the risk of producing not useful but unfulfilled, disgruntled and embittered men, the agitators of the future or their ready dupes' (Beveridge 1963 : 33).

Thus without the advancement or the hard way up at work employers had to take far more care over selection. It was no longer any good relying on family connections or on picking up likely lads from interviews or the production line.

2) That it was wasteful to give people either too much or too little training.

'Modern industry must be efficient. It must use the brains

of its technically trained staffs to run a system of production making maximum use of mechanical power and using, so far as it can, de-skilled methods of primary fabrication, machinery and assembly so as to make the maximum productive use of its adequately - but no more than that - trained operatives' (my underlining) (Beveridge 1963 : 23).

The aim here was to give those people with the ability (the brains) enough training for the complex work they were expected to do and not to over-train those (the brainless?) who were expected to do the de-skilled work at the lowest level. Both to over-train and to under-train was bad and could be a waste of training and a waste of a worker.

To improve and supervise training at all levels Government training boards were set up in the 1960's and they proceeded to lay down the patterns and details of training for each level of work. For instance to see that the craft apprentice learnt his skill the engineering training board exercised control 'through prescribed training specifications, instruction manuals, trainee log books and a system of tests' (E.I.T.B.<sup>(2)</sup> 1968 : 3) and insisted that apprentices went to college 'for a course of further education which matches the training course' (E.I.T.B. 1968 : 3).

#### Modern industry and the new system of education

The new system of education could not have been better designed to fit in with the new ideas on selection and training (in Coventry the engineering industry had of course been instrumental in getting the pre-tech examination introduced into schools); both had ability at heart and aimed to match ability and work. Given an educational system in which there was equality of opportunity employers could rely on the schools to find people who had the right ability for a particular training and level of work. It suited them to have wide ranging qualifications from those of a degree all the way down to grade five C.S.E. measuring a wide range of ability, because it meant that they were able to



select more accurately from top to bottom. Those with no qualifications would be fit for the 'de-skilled' work which required very little training and ability and those with qualifications would be fit for the other levels of work, from skilled work up to a profession, which required ever increasing ability and more and more training.

In Coventry, by 1970, there were qualifications attached to most training courses. If you wanted to get an apprenticeship it was at least 'an advantage to hold the C.S.E. in appropriate subjects or to be intending to take the examination' (E.M.E.B.<sup>(3)</sup>) and usually the entry qualifications were specific: 'Exams C.S.E. grades 2-4 Subjects Maths plus two others' (G.T.S.<sup>(4)</sup>). Qualifications were also an integral part of further education and the technical college produced a document (the Coventry Document) which showed the recommended qualifications for all their courses. For the past few years the document 'has been used as a guide to the selection of school leavers for employment'.

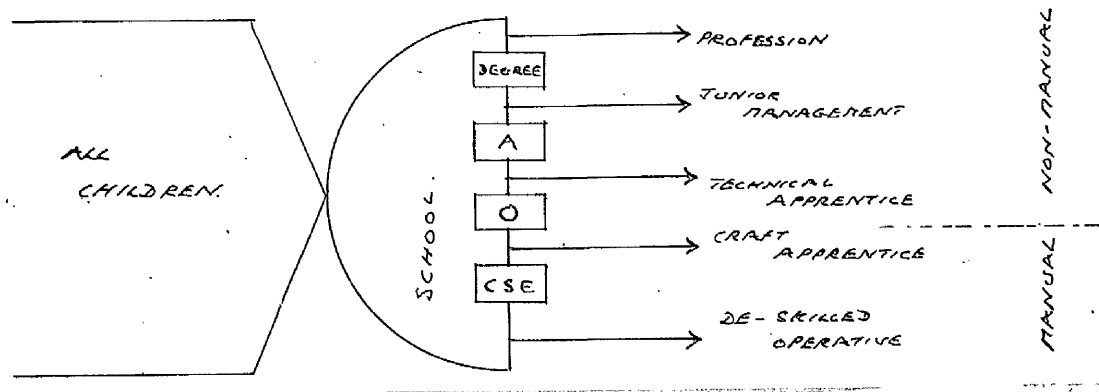
The document describes the good effects of C.S.E.:

'Industry has welcomed the C.S.E. because of its national currency. Advertisements for apprentices and young persons in the local press have been more precise since training officers have been able to specify C.S.E. subjects and grades desirable.' .....

'Further education has improved its ability to place young persons in suitable further education courses by employing the C.S.E. as an additional guidance factor. As a result subsequent transfers between courses have been reduced and there has been a substantial improvement in examination successes, mainly in craft and technician courses. As a corollary wastage has been greatly reduced.'

This was the new system: everyone going to the same type of school was to have an equal opportunity to show their ability in school and to be selected for the level of work and training that suited them and their ability.

FIGURE 15: Work and the new system of education



Under this system background should count for less, improvement at work would be harder and school and education became far more important; there would be more than sport at stake.

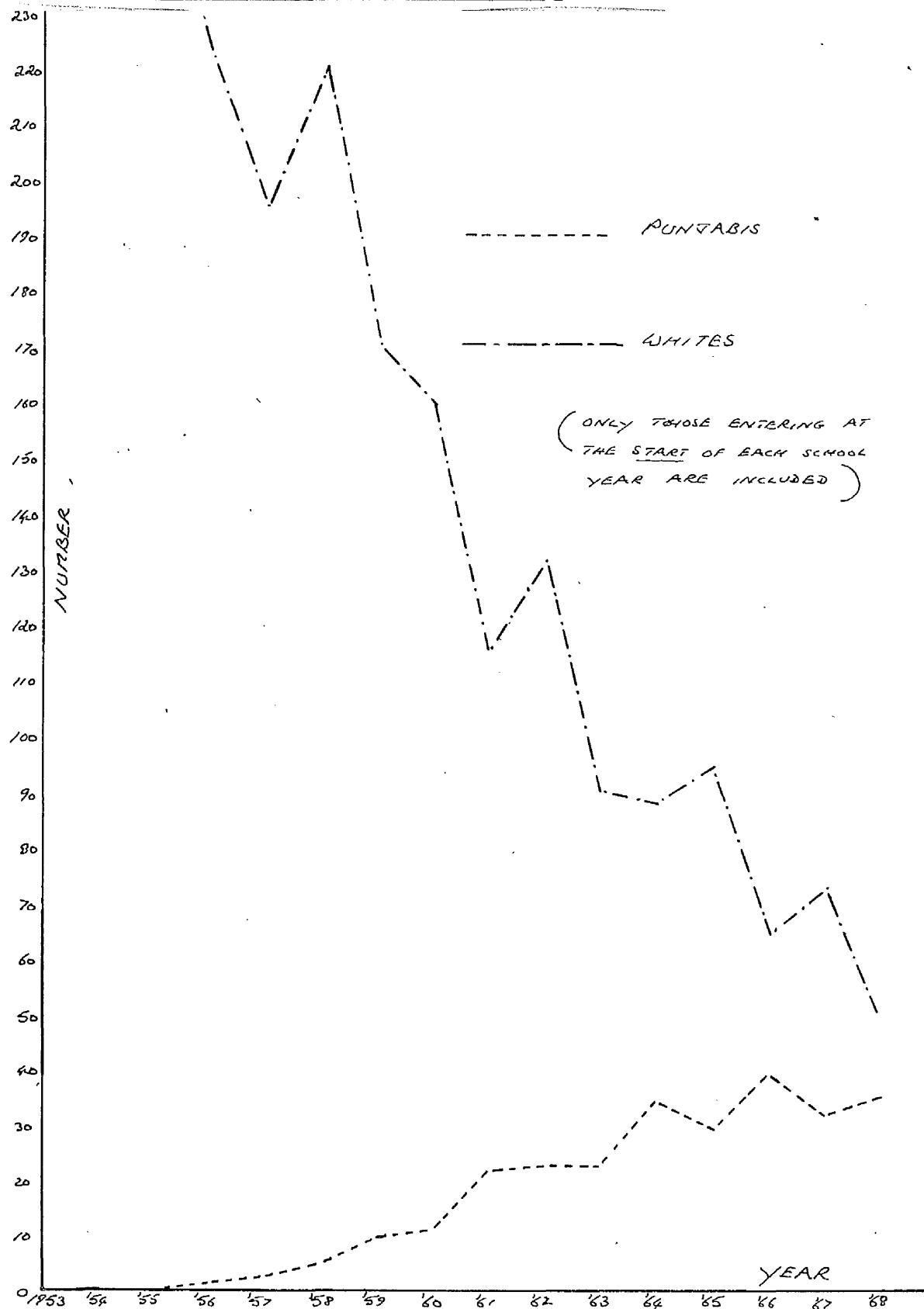
#### The coming of the English-Punjabis

Luckily for them the English-Punjabis started coming to Broad Heath and Frederick Bird in the 1950's just as the comprehensives were being built and the pre-tech examination was about to start. A Punjabi name first appears on a Broad Heath register in 1953 and from then on the number of Punjabis (and other Asians) coming to both schools gradually increased and the number of whites decreased (Figure 16).

The whole idea that there should be more opportunity in areas like Hillfields and Foleshill and that there should be an educational system that allowed those with ability to get to the top regardless of background and wealth suited the Punjabis very well; it was as if the changes had been made for them (and vice versa). Before long practically the only people taking the new opportunities were Asians, amongst whom the English-Punjabis were the most prominent group:

In 1966    9 English-Punjabis and 1 white were transferred at  
13+ to comprehensive

**FIGURE 16:** Numbers of whites and Punjabis entering Frederick Bird and Broad Heath schools 1953-1968



In 1970    16 English-Punjabis and 3 whites stayed on for an extra year to take C.S.E.

In 1971    4 English-Punjabis and 0 whites went on to comprehensive school at 15+.

The right attitudes in the wrong place

The attitudes of the English-Punjabis might have fitted the new system of education but in the two schools which were wedded to the old system they were out of place. There was something funny about so many people wanting to be doctors or to go to university and something odd about people taking education so seriously - and doing so well - when in their homes they seemed to lack all the talk, play, toys, books that stimulated learning and achievement. It was somehow contradictory for education to be important and for parents to show so little interest. Just as teachers were coming round to the idea that there should be more contact between home and school here were the Punjabis doing very well with an absolute minimum of contact.

Also, in a secondary modern, it was slightly ridiculous and sometimes very annoying to have so many people who wanted to stay on at school. Even the less able, some way down in the lower streams, wanted to learn and to stay on. Their unusual motivation put teachers in an uncomfortably negative position; far from extolling school and education they were in the odd position of having to persuade people to leave and trying to put them off school and to discourage learning. Many were being taken seriously by the wrong people and they did not like it.

There were various reasons why the less able should leave school at the earliest opportunity but none of them showed either school or education in a very good light. The most obvious reason was that if people from the lower streams stayed on at the school it could mean problems for the school and for the careers office. Employment depended both on qualifications and on age and experience and if pupils spent an extra year at school without having anything to show for it

(getting older without getting any qualifications or work experience) then it was harder for the careers office to find them work. Some teachers thought that they were acting in the pupils' best interests in getting them to leave, but it was difficult to see how people from the lower streams who faced an unending mixture of semi-skilled (or 'de-skilled') work and unemployment could be any worse off if they stayed at school (and it did not say much for the school if it was true). It was also argued that it would be wrong to let them stay at school and so raise their hopes and leave them to face worse disappointment in the end; the sooner they faced work the better, so in a sense teachers were doing them a favour in getting them to leave. But it was hard to balance the thought that they would be better off doing routine work - say in a foundry - with the idea that, as most teachers thought, school and education were most concerned with personal development and satisfaction (was a foundry better for that than a school?). Unfortunately the fact that it was better for those who were not going to get useful qualifications to finish with school and education seemed to confirm the idea that school was basically concerned with jobs and qualifications. Persuading people from the lower streams to leave school and, in effect, to do repetitive manual work made a bit of a mockery of Frederick Bird's high sounding aims to teach people how to live with each other and to find their true place in society and to become successful citizens.

#### Disunity and decline

As the number of Asians increased and the number of whites decreased it became increasingly difficult to think of either school as a unit. It was not only Asian attitudes that were different it was almost everything from their behaviour and language to their colour and their names; according to those teachers who liked to perform even their sense of humour was different. They did not seem to fit into the usual categories and had little in common with any of the whites: teachers or

pupils. Gradually even the Asians themselves became disunited as more and more came from East Africa and Pakistan as well as from the Punjab. It was clear that with the Punjabis and other Asians added to the new system of education the days of the limited working class school were over for Broad Heath and Frederick Bird, the schools had to change or die.

By 1970 both schools had a changing mixture of pupils and teachers and a collection of different methods and ideas. In another situation and another school such a mixture might have been creative but in Broad Heath and Frederick Bird the mixture was straightjacketed by the old order and it was thoroughly destructive.

The same old buildings and facilities remained. The same subjects were taught and, whilst there was more variety in teaching methods, classes were still streamed and the dominant method and main aims were much the same. The few changes in the timetable had only added to the difference and the confusion; there was the extra selection, the extra year and the C.S.E. and there was also more specialisation so that teachers now had a special subject to teach rather than a special class. The result was that there were a lot of short teaching periods and most people moved about from classroom to classroom every thirty-five minutes.

The staff were as mixed up as anyone; they were old and young; some were long-staying (10 or more years) and some short-staying (2-3 years); some had come in the 1950's when the schools were 'up' (like those who had been attracted to Broad Heath by the sport) and some had just come in the 1970's when the schools were 'down' and had been attracted by the thought of an inner city school with immigrants.

Between them they produced an assortment of methods and ideas most of which came from other times and places and had very little to do with the present. Some teachers looked to the old order, others looked to a new child-centred education with more of the freedom, the flexibility and the relevance which, paradoxically, were meant to have

been the essence, the great opportunity of the old secondary moderns. Meanwhile Punjabis and Asians had arrived who were quite clearly looking to the future and the new opportunities. They came to school for the knowledge, the qualification and the better job and school was the only place they could get them. They could get their character, their social education and express themselves just as well outside school and amongst their family and friends, in fact much better there than in a classroom with a teacher. And they got most of their sport from the football they played outside school with other Punjabis.

#### Mixed streams

The pupils were more mixed than the teachers and there was a regular turnover. Throughout the year pupils were leaving because they were moving to another area or joining the school because they had just moved into the area. Despite the mixture both schools persisted with normal streaming.

With streaming the expectation is that each class will contain boys with similar intellects who are similarly motivated towards their school work. Usually there are clear divisions between streams and you end up with the good boys dominating the top stream and the bad boys dominating the bottom stream (Hargreaves 1967 : 161-3). But in the two schools, by 1970, these divisions were very blurred and there was very little sense in the streaming and class teaching. With such a mixture of pupils it was difficult to tell whether the main divisions were between the good and the bad; the clever and the stupid; the whites and the Asians; the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking; the interested and the not interested etc., and by sticking to the old order the school ended with as many divisions within streams as between them and so had the contradiction of mixed streams.

The fact that pupils had to stay for an extra year to take C.S.E. was an added complication. By the fourth year the A stream was reserved for those who had both the ability to pass C.S.E. and who wanted to stay at school. The result was that those whites who had the ability but who

did not want to stay at school had to move down to the lower streams where they joined many English-Punjabis who were in the opposite predicament of wanting to stay but not being allowed to.

The A stream in the fourth year was overwhelmingly Asian and that plus the fact that the pupils had C.S.E. as their common objective made it something like a normal A stream. The pupils did textbook work and learnt as a class in the normal way. It was in the lower streams that there was the real mixture. In the B and C streams there were three main categories: whites who were just waiting to leave and who had had enough of school and the old familiar class work; English-Punjabis who wanted to go on learning and to stay at school and were quite happy to do the same traditional work as the A stream; newcomers who had just come to England and who wanted a basic education (mainly English and maths.) before they started work. Thus the lower streams were just the opposite of a normal stream, thoroughly mixed in intellect, ability, and motivation, yet they were treated like any other B stream. Their timetable included some classwork, some projects, lots of sport, films, industrial visits, talks, careers work, art and craft work and lots of odd jobs and errand running; a typical B stream education.

#### The end

It is not surprising that the two old schools could not cope with all the changes there had been in the 1950's and 1960's. The changes landed on schools which were completely unprepared and which were not helped or even expected to change; as a result they could not have survived. The actual schools and the whites living in Hillfields and Foleshill have gained nothing from all the changes. As elementary schools, as senior schools, as secondary moderns, Broad Heath and Frederick Bird were designed to be limited and in a sense Broad Heath made the most of its limitations by building up its remarkable sporting reputation. Perhaps it was fitting that by 1970, two years before it closed, the school could not even produce a senior rugby team.



NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

- (1) The new system of education is based on the comprehensive school and the aim to give equal opportunities to all children. This has proved a difficult aim to realise and a bill has yet to be passed which compels all local authorities to introduce comprehensive schools. Thus the new system of education has yet to be fully realised (even within comprehensive schools there is the problem of how to provide equal opportunities) but over the years there has been a gradual move towards it. Thus the new system is more a goal than a reality and the basic distinction I am making is between the comprehensive schools which I associate with the move to provide equal opportunities and the secondary modern/grammar, board/secondary, elementary/secondary schools which I associate with the idea that different opportunities should be offered at different schools and that the majority should go to one type of school and the exceptional minority should go to another.

In Coventry the move to the new educational system (as I explain in more detail later) started in the 1950's and is not yet complete. In Hillfields and Foleshill the new and old systems represented by the comprehensive and secondary modern schools co-existed for at least twenty years before, in 1972, a new comprehensive school was built and the secondary modern schools were closed. During that time the new system of education was also represented by the drive to increase the opportunities in the secondary modern schools by introducing qualifications and transferring increasing numbers to schools where there were better opportunities. Thus there is no hard and fast distinction between the new and the old, no act of parliament or particular time that mark the change from one system to another. The two systems will co-exist for some time yet, there are still adherents of the old system just as there were adherents of the new system at the beginning of the century.

- (2) Engineering Industry Training Board: Manual for training engineering craftsmen.
- (3) East Midlands Electricity Board.
- (4) Group Training Scheme.

CHAPTER SIX  
PROGRESS THROUGH SCHOOL

Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to chart, as simply as possible, the progress and achievements of the English-Punjabis in school. In order to show their achievements more clearly I contrast their progress with that of the whites who were at school with the English-Punjabis.

There is an obvious difference between the records of the whites and the English-Punjabis which can be explained by their different attitudes and background: the Punjabi background of the English-Punjabis (chapters 2 and 4) and the working class background of the whites (chapter 1). Two quotations help to emphasise (or possibly caricature) this difference in background:

George Hodgkinson who is one of the most famous of Coventry craftsmen and trade unionists starts his autobiography by saying

'My family and social roots are in the working class, with no other desire or ambition than to rise with it.'

Dr. Pettigrew in her book on Jat politics in the Punjab 'Robber Noblemen' describes the

'jealousy and intense competitiveness of the Jats... (and their) traditional view of life which saw no complement between an individual's profit and the community's gain. Each Jat concentrated on his own individual profit and gain, an attitude consistent with the lack of a feeling of solidarity among the Jats. Each wanted primarily power over others and a materially good life.' (p.207)

This chapter should show the crucial importance of background and attitude to educational achievement and that equality of opportunity does not necessarily lessen their importance. If equal opportunities are presented in school it does not follow that everyone will show their ability or take the opportunities and it does not mean that a person's work after school will necessarily be matched to their ability any more than it was under the old system. The whites and the English-Punjabis

have the same opportunities but it is only the English-Punjabis who have the right attitudes to take those opportunities.

Starting school: unknown quantities

Usually when children come to a school the teachers know something about them right from the start. They will probably know the children's background and they will soon get an idea of their ability from the way children behave and how they dress and how they talk. For instance when a boy starts primary school in Hillfields and Foleshill teachers may know his family through brothers and sisters who have been at the school or through meeting his parents; they may know what work his father does, unskilled, skilled, chargehand, foreman etc., and these background details, taken with what they can see of the boy, will help the teachers to know what to expect. Before long it will be in their minds: 'he's grammar school, he's A stream, he's B stream.'

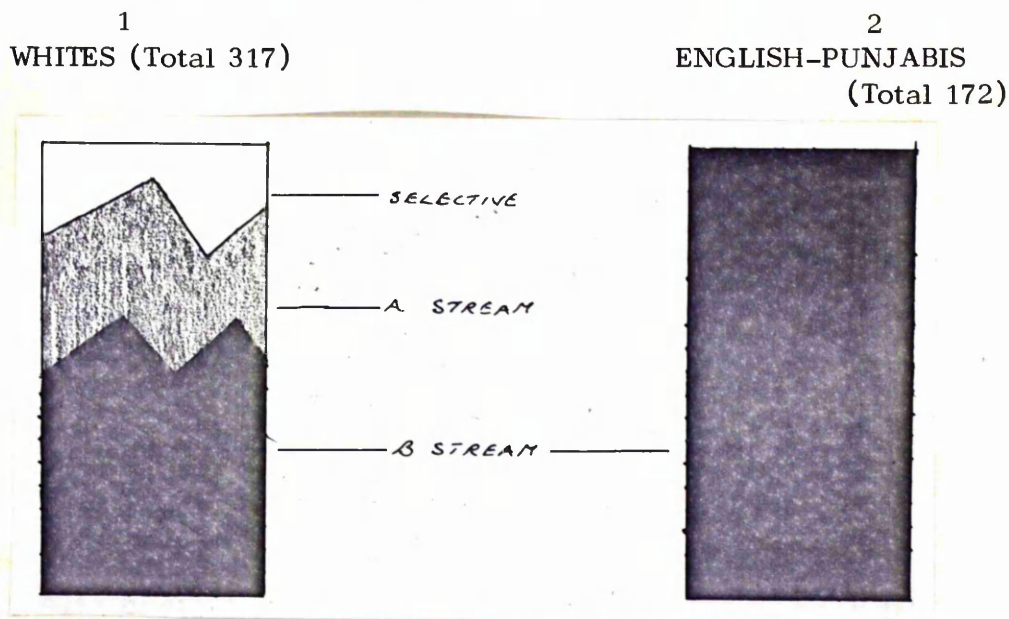
The English-Punjabis were at primary school some time during the period between 1953-1967 and many of them were amongst the first Punjabis to go to their schools; so with them it was very different because the teachers had no experience and very few signs to go by. They could not sort them out from their background or from what they looked like. They might know that a boy lived in a certain street and they could safely assume that his father did some sort of labouring job but they would not know much beyond that. They could not tell from the names whether the boy had brothers or sisters at the same school and, because the teachers did not know Punjabi or anything about Punjabi society, they were not helped by the way a boy spoke or the way he dressed or behaved. What can you tell about someone who looks scruffy or smart if you do not know where they come from or what they are saying?

From what the teachers knew the Punjabis were an undifferentiated group when they started school. They were all immigrants, they were all coloured, most of them had the same name, they all spoke Punjabi

(some spoke English as well), and most had fathers who had come to England for the unskilled work and the money. Probably the best that teachers could do was to lump them all together somewhere near the bottom, expecting one Singh to be like another and for them all to be like other low status groups. Therefore, in contrast to the whites, the English-Punjabis started school unsorted and bunched together at the bottom, equally backward.

The chart below (Figure 17) shows the likely situation with the members of the set all being thought of as B stream standard when they started school (at various different times and ages during the period from 1953-67) but with the whites, who started at the same schools during the same period, being roughly differentiated by the teachers and recognised early on as likely candidates for grammar school or the A or B streams.

FIGURE 17: Likely differentiation during first years at primary school



At the end of primary school there comes the formal process of secondary school selection. No longer is it simply a case of teacher's impressions and expectations. Now there are examinations and reports

which help to sort the pupils out and to place them in their appropriate school and stream.

First there is the 11+, the pupils who do best in that are given places at grammar schools, the next get places at comprehensive schools and the remainder go on to the local secondary modern schools.

Of the English-Punjabis

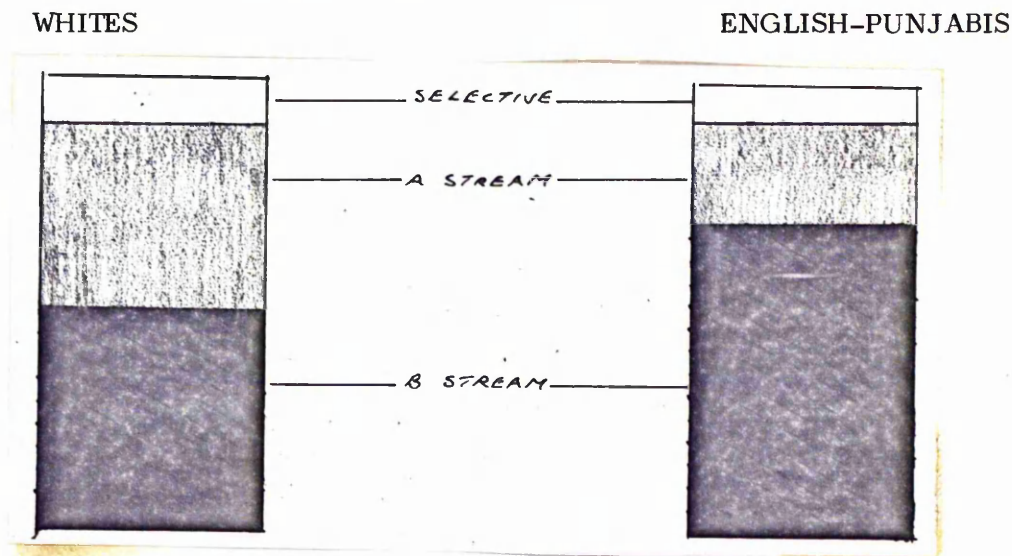
8% (14 members of the set) passed the 11+ and went to selective school. All but one went to comprehensive.

Of the whites

9% (26 whites who were at the same schools as the members of the set and left during the same period) passed the 11+ and went to selective school. About a quarter went to grammar school.

The remainder (about 90% in each case) went to either Broad Heath or Frederick Bird. Once there they were streamed. Of the whites about as many started in the A stream as in the B stream (four in the A for every five in the B). Of the English-Punjabis over three times as many started in the B stream as in the A stream. This is shown in the following chart (Figure 18).

FIGURE 18: Differentiation at 11+





#### Progress to the fourth year

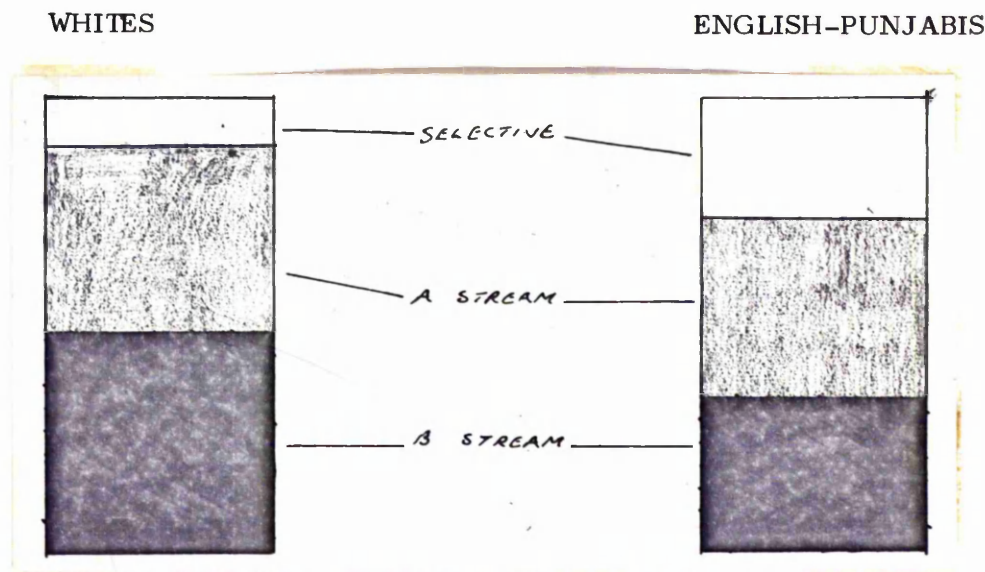
At 13+ (the end of the second year) the best at secondary modern had the chance to transfer to comprehensive school.

Of the English-Punjabis 17% were transferred to comprehensive.

Of the whites 1% were transferred to comprehensive.

During the four years in secondary modern over half the Punjabis were promoted either from the B stream to the A stream or from the A stream to selective school. No one was demoted. In contrast only one white in ten was promoted and almost as many were demoted. So by the fourth year the distribution of the English-Punjabis had changed considerably whilst that of the whites had not really altered. (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: Differentiation at 14+



#### The end of the fourth year and leaving school

The fourth year was the last compulsory year at school. At the end anyone in the B stream had to leave and anyone at selective school or in the A stream could choose whether to leave or to stay on and take O level or C.S.E.

Of those who had the choice, most English-Punjabis (92%)

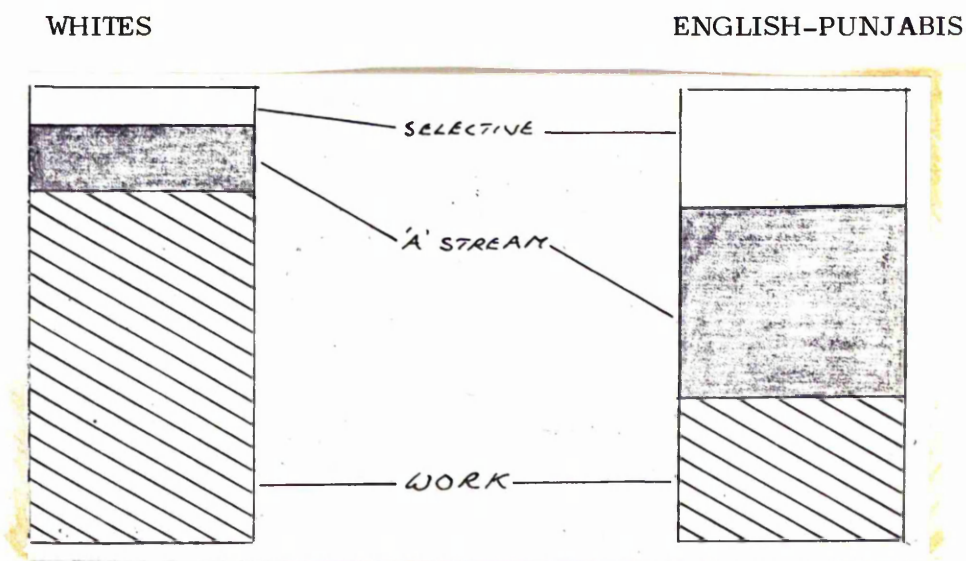
decided to stay..... most whites (58%) decided to leave.

Of the English-Punjabis 100% at selective school stayed and 92% of those in the A stream stayed.

Of the whites 90% at selective school stayed and 32% of those in the A stream stayed.

Thus by the end of the fourth year the picture was as shown in figure 20.

FIGURE 20: Differentiation at 15+



At the end of the fifth year

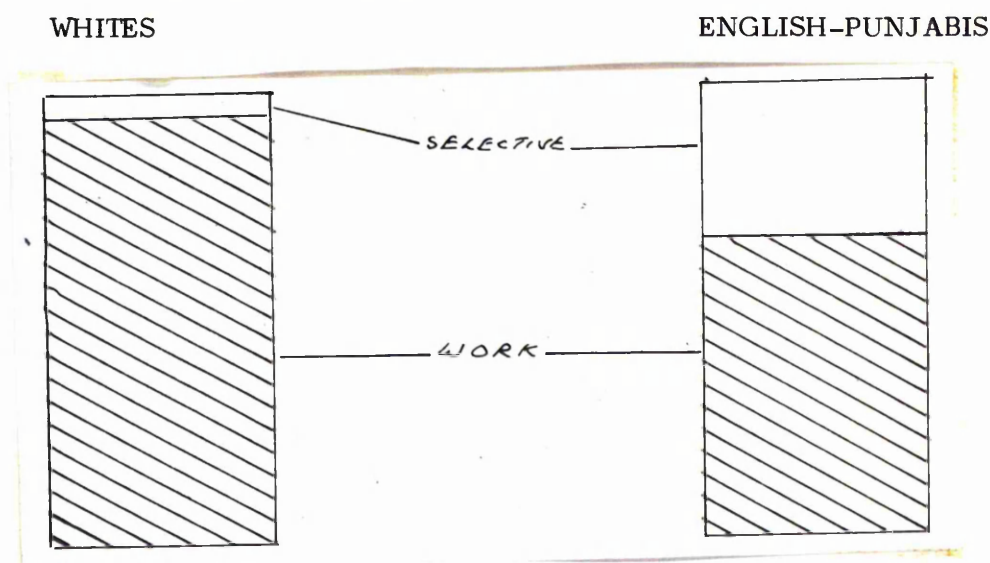
Those who did well at C.S.E. or O level could have continued full-time education if they had wanted to. They could have got a place either at a comprehensive school or at a college of further education.

Of the English-Punjabis 95% at selective school carried on with full-time education and 22% of those in the A stream carried on with full-time education (see Figure 21).

Of the whites 55% at selective school carried on with full-time education and 0% of those in the A stream carried on with full-time education (see Figure 21).



FIGURE 21: Differentiation at 16+



By the sixth year.....

33% or one in three of the English-Punjabis were carrying on with full time education

5% or one in twenty of the whites were carrying on with full time education.

### Success

Of the English-Punjabis who started from the bottom in primary school about one in four can be expected to end up on a degree course either at university or polytechnic (compared to less than one in twenty of the whites).

This is success by any standards, yet the English-Punjabis have none of the typical background advantages; they are not wealthy, they are not middle class and, considering that they all speak Punjabi at home, they do not have any language advantages. Considering all the commitments that a Punjabi family were likely to have, parents might have been expected to pull their sons out of school at the first opportunity and get them earning money. One boy said as much:

'Punjabis are encouraged by their parents to do better at school, but sometimes parents can have the reverse influence. They're so intent on making money fast. They might be in debt or there

might be some project going back in India. They want to build some house, set their daughters up to get married so they try to get their sons working as soon as possible you know as soon as he's fifteen they get him off school and put him in a factory.'

But in fact, out of the whole set of English-Punjabis, no one who had the choice left school simply to earn some money.

What carries the Punjabis through are their attitudes and the pressure that comes from their families, from other Punjabis, from the whites and from themselves. They know their situation better than anyone else and they know just what education means in Punjabi and in English society. They do not stay at school regardless nor do they stay simply because their parents tell them to.

Their attitudes are suited to the new educational system. They come to school to learn, to get qualifications and a better job and they are in school for the competition, the opportunities and the success. They know that if they leave at fifteen they will be cut off from the learning, the qualifications and the good jobs. In such a situation most want to stay and it is only a few from the B stream, with little option, who willingly leave school and accept working like their parents. It is only those who were allowed to stay to do C.S.E. who had a real choice between school and work, it is they who have to decide whether to go for an apprenticeship or to stay at school. The apprentice goes to college, gets trade certificates and has the opportunity to end up as well off as someone who stays at school. In this situation most of the English-Punjabis settled for work - and a good apprenticeship. Usually it was only those who had good prospects at O and A level who stayed on at school.

A few parents blindly insisted on more school because they knew that if their sons were going to get to the top (doctor etc.) they had to stay at school and go to college.

'My father said I have to stay so I take his word.'... 'It's the parents (who make you stay). You don't have the choice. You can't say no.'

But most parents realised that their sons were in a better position than themselves to decide what to do. They were the ones who knew the opportunities and who knew their own ability and interest:

'They leave it to me whether I want to make my life worthwhile or not.'... 'They talk a lot about education but they think it's your own choice. They tell you everything, they say, "I want you to stay on", then they say, "all right you do what you want to do."... 'He (my father) has said "If you want to do well it's up to you. Do well."... 'Parents don't mind, they say, "If you want to get a job all right. If you want to carry on, carry on. It's up to you."'

#### Why do the whites leave?

Having talked about why they were so keen to stay at school, I asked about the differences between them and the whites in their attitudes to education and if they could explain why, in comparison, the whites left school so readily.

'They think for today, not the future. If you think about the future you don't need to go to cafes. If you think about the time now...it's up to you.'... 'They want to work and get some money and enjoy themselves.'... 'They're not bothered whether they got high qualifications, they know they'll get a job.'... 'They can get a job much easier than we can really.'... 'They're sick of the teachers.'... 'You're tied down in school.'... 'They get bored with it right and they want to go out and get some money in their pockets.'... 'Just mainly freedom you know.'... 'I think it's mostly the thing to do you know, if your friends leave.'... 'The education doesn't really have anything to offer that you don't get otherwise. I mean if you want some money right, you can easily get into a semi-skilled job.'... 'Once you leave school you're free so you earn your living right you come home right you're free then.'

Money, freedom, enjoyment ..... these seemed to be powerful reasons for leaving:

'They're really bothered about enjoying themselves at the right age. I think they're right really. I think I'm thick staying.'

A conversation with a group of English-Punjabis in the sixth form at one of the comprehensives led to the conclusion that the English-Punjabis

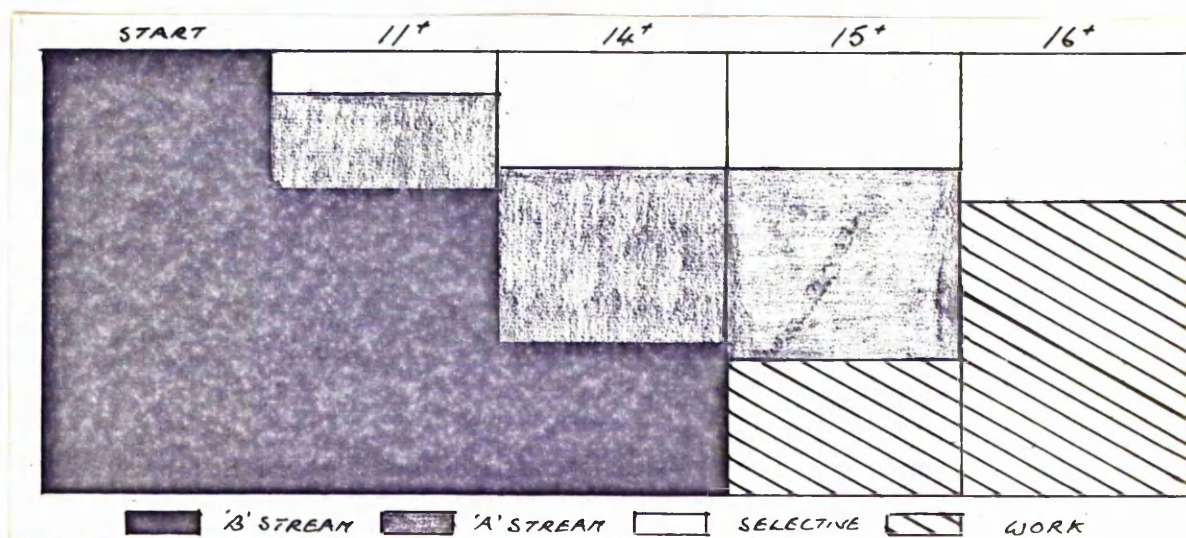
stayed at school and the whites left school for much the same reasons. It was just a matter of the English-Punjabis being more far-sighted. When I asked why they thought the whites tended to leave school as soon as possible one person said bluntly, 'money and freedom,' and then there was silence as everyone realised what he had said. At last someone else said, 'That's about the two most important things in life.' So why did they stay? More silences, and then the answer, 'because we'll have more chance of getting more money and more freedom.'

### The Punjabis and the whites and the two systems of education

The Punjabis and the whites go to the same schools, they face the same opportunities but they relate to two different systems of education; the old and the new.

The Punjabis and their attitudes go with the new system. Their time is the future and school is a place of opportunities; they enter the competition willingly and they want the success of university, degree and profession. The diagram below (figure 22), in which the previous diagrams are placed alongside each other, shows that their progress through school is marked by steps where they climbed from one level to another, from B, to A, to selective and taken the opportunity of more school and qualifications.

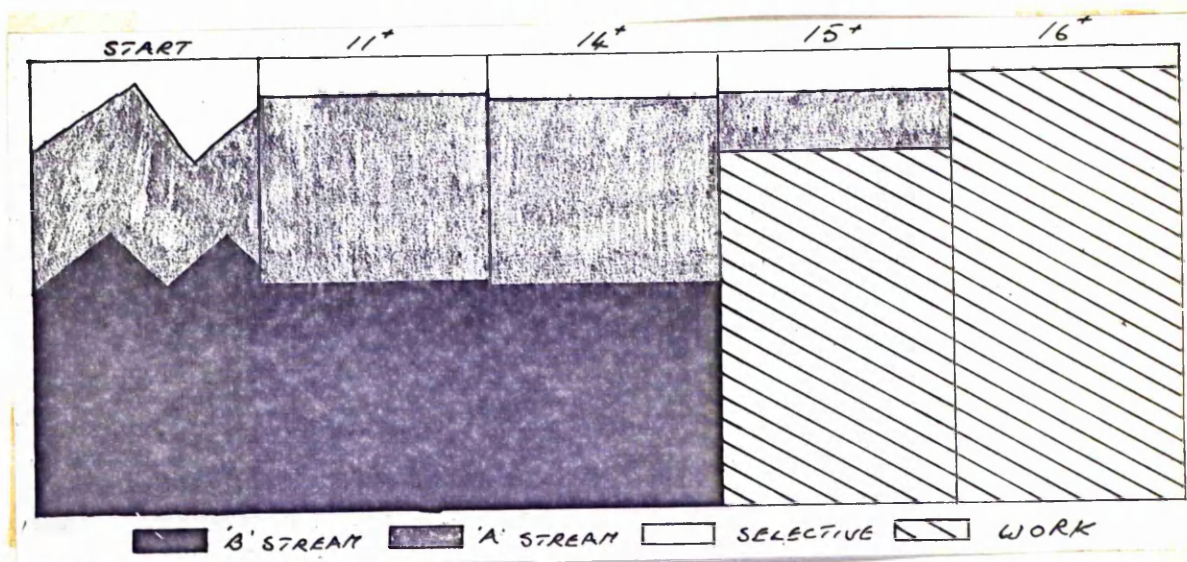
FIGURE 22: Progress through school for the English-Punjabis





The whites, on the other hand, are stuck with the old system in which school is a prelude to work, qualifications are either not available or not important, the leaving age for the majority is fourteen or fifteen or whatever the set minimum happens to be and the real opportunities are outside school. They are conscripts doing their national education just like their fathers and in the same old buildings. No wonder they leave for money and freedom. The record of their progress through school (figure 23) shows most of them passing through on their way to work ignoring the opportunity of more school and qualifications.

FIGURE 23: Progress through school for the whites



I asked the English-Punjabis how they accounted for the fact that they took the opportunities whereas the whites did not.

'When we come over from India we come all of us as a bunch come over right. Whereas the working class here are in the working class because they've had their chance right of getting success but they've failed whereas in our society we still have a potential and we still have to sort ourselves out.'... 'The English people they're used to it. I mean their father and grandfather been going to the same school. They don't worry about it. They're all right.'... 'The education doesn't really have anything to offer that you don't get otherwise. I mean if you want some money right you can easily get into a semi-skilled job and still get the same amount of money whereas the

Indians seem to put the emphasis on other things such as prestige and social standing and all these kind of things.'...

'You look at their dads and stuff. I mean in a home they're only introduced to a certain field of work so if you're getting money why try to get further.'...'They don't expect a job higher than what their father got.'...'It depends on their background. If their father works in a factory he might have a bit of influence and say that this is quite a good job, there's a lot of money here so why don't you come and do this and though he may have an excellent brain he just drips away.'

It is the whites who are class bound and they move towards their fathers' level of work and away from the highest levels of work. There is no such thing as a working class doctor or a working class manager. If they aim high they aim out of their class. Any whites who take the opportunities and who go for selective school, for qualifications, university etc., have to move against their background and against expectations.

With the Punjabis it is just the opposite. They are trying to get away from the hard factory work that their fathers do and they are aiming towards the highest levels of work. Those who take the opportunities and succeed do so in support of the joint family and are highly respected in their own society. As a Punjabi and a Jat you cannot do much better than be a landlord, a doctor or a manager.

#### Work after school

There is a similar difference between the whites and the English-Punjabis in the work they do after school. It is easier to see this difference if I split the wide range of work available into two main categories: engineering and other.

Over half the jobs available in Coventry are connected with engineering and I take the category to include jobs such as: machinist, relay adjuster, assembler, car sprayer, mechanic, polisher, garage assistant, fitter, toolmaker, sheet metal worker, electrician, welder, etc.

Other work is mostly connected with building, catering, shops and

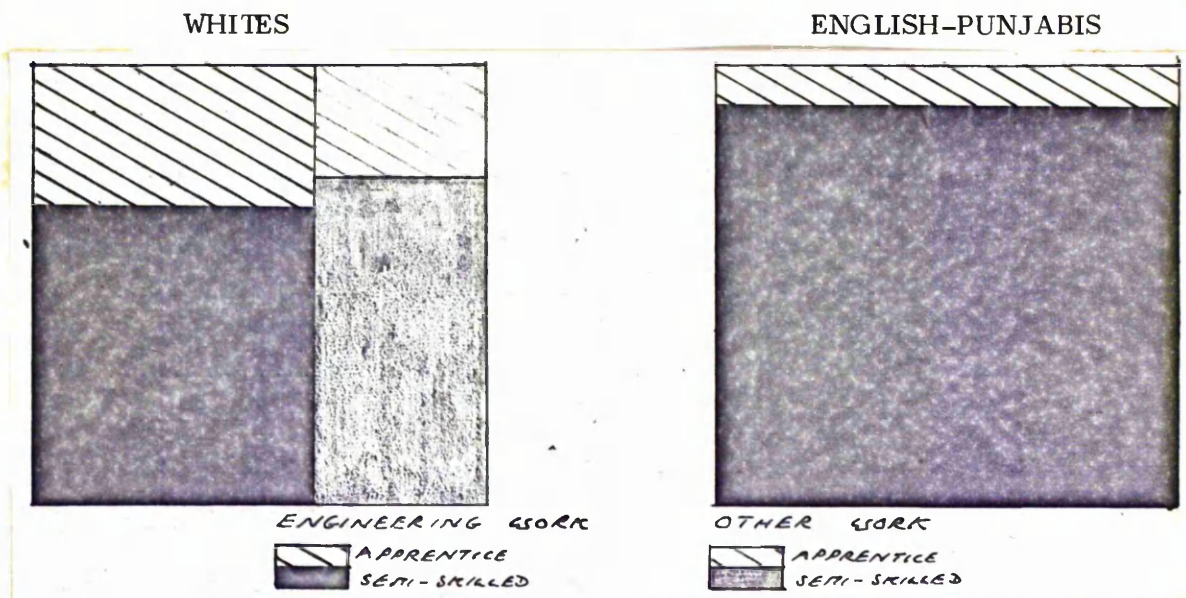
the army and I take this category to include jobs such as: window cleaner, store boy, warehouse assistant, shop assistant, packing case maker, shelf filler, butcher's assistant, joiner, waiter, chef, plumber, hairdresser, painter and decorator, etc.

There are two main levels of work for the fourth and fifth year school leavers and they are apprentice (i.e. toolmaker, carpenter) and semi-skilled (i.e. machinist, shop assistant). The diagrams below (Figures 24 and 25) show the proportions at each level of work (apprentice or semi-skilled) and in each category of work (engineering and other).

#### Fourth year leavers

In both cases most (90% of the English-Punjabis) do semi-skilled work.

FIGURE 24: Work done by fourth year leavers

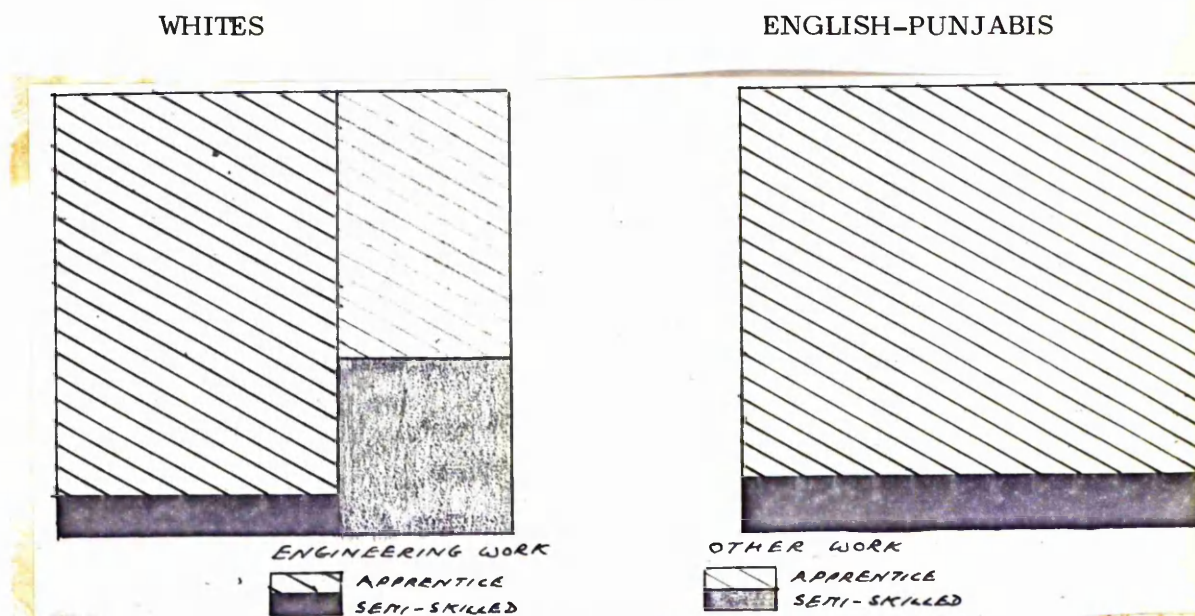


#### Fifth year leavers

In both cases most (88% of the English-Punjabis) are apprenticed.



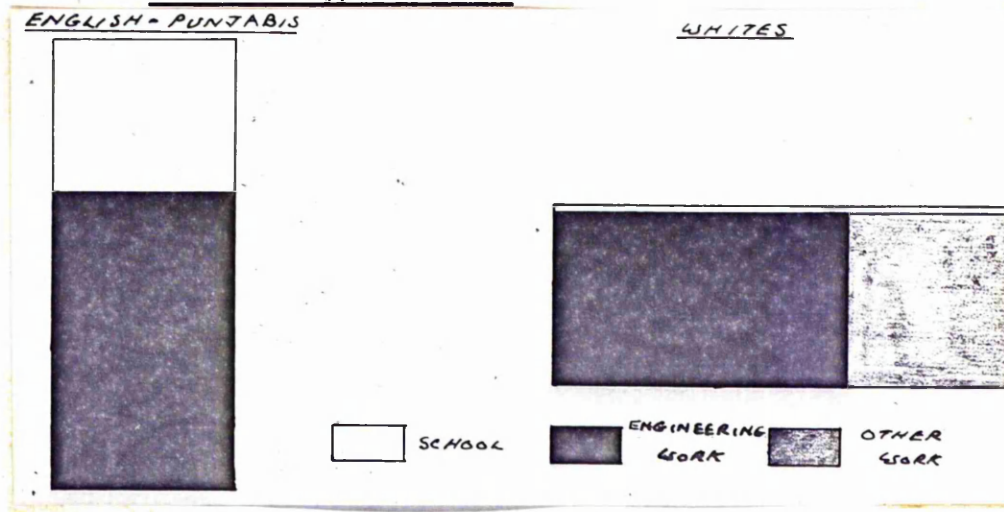
FIGURE 25: Work done by fifth year leavers



The whites who have left school by the age of sixteen (95% of the total) take work from both categories; most of them do engineering work but at least a third do other work. The English-Punjabis who have left school by sixteen (only 66% of the total) only do engineering work. The difference between the proportions staying at school after sixteen and the difference between the proportions in the two categories of work are both consistent with the difference in background. The whites are widespread within one level of work (the manual and working class level) and the English-Punjabis can be expected to be widespread across different levels of work (manual and non-manual).



FIGURE 26: The spread of whites and English-Punjabis across different levels and types of work



There are various reasons why the Punjabis appear to be restricted to engineering work: they do not have the tradition of doing manual work in England and so they lack the necessary contacts; they only know about and are connected with a very restricted range of manual work; it was engineering that drew the Punjabis to Coventry in the first place; the attractive jobs like mechanic and electrician, jobs which could be useful in the Punjab, are mostly connected with engineering; at the apprentice level the engineering industry offers the best training facilities; finally jobs in the engineering category are often easier to get than the other jobs. Certainly it was comparatively easy for a Punjabi to get a job at a low level in engineering. Some employers liked young Punjabis as operators, doing the routine factory work, because they were less trouble and they worked better than the whites. With much of the other work (as with the better engineering work) there was more discrimination against the Punjabis.

Some of the jobs the whites do would not be considered by the English-Punjabis (e.g. apprentice hairdresser, shoe repairer) and the difference of attitude is very clear when one looks at the jobs taken by the few Punjabis and more of the whites who were in the A stream or at selective school but who decided to leave school without taking an examination. Many of the jobs the whites take seem to be a flat

rejection of school and a straight bid for money, freedom and time NOW.

All those whites from selective school and over half those from the A stream who left school at the end of the fourth year took jobs like: machinist, car sprayer, scrap yard assistant, waiter, delivery boy, building worker, warehouse assistant, shelf filler, butter packer, factory labourer.

There were just five English-Punjabis who left school in the fourth year when they were in the A stream and there is no sign of rejection in the jobs they took: one went to work in the family shop, two went to work in garages with the prospect of apprenticeships, one got an electrical apprenticeship with the coal board and one went on a training scheme with a large engineering firm.

### Conclusion

I have shown that the school records of the whites and the Punjabis are very different and I have argued that both the whites and the English-Punjabis are very largely conditioned by their differing backgrounds. The attitudes and the performance of the whites lie with the old system of education and the attitudes of the English-Punjabis lie with the new system so it is they who take the opportunities.

I have included work in this chapter, and in the final chapter I look more closely at the different levels of work I have mentioned and at what happens to the English-Punjabis once they are sixteen and the majority have finished with school and taken their opportunities.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

- (1) To get the figures and percentages that I give in this chapter under the heading whites I went through the Primary school registers and included all boys with traditionally British names who were recorded as having left primary schools in Hillfields and Foleshill at the same time as members of the set (i.e. in the period 1963-7) and gone either to the local secondary modern schools or to a selective school. I then used the registers kept by the secondary modern schools and the records of the careers office to trace these boys through school and into work. The percentages do not include the few who left early or of whom there is no record.
- (2) This is the total number of English-Punjabis who were members of the set and for whom I have complete records. That is records right through from the day they started primary school until they either started work or continued their education in a sixth form or at college. Therefore this and subsequent charts refer to all the members of the set that I could trace and not to any particular year.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### WORK

In the final chapter I show what happens to the English-Punjabis once they have taken the opportunities made available by the new system of education. The English-Punjabis are a unique example of a group of people who start at the bottom in English society and who aim for - and to some extent reach - the top. It is very rare for people who work and who are educated at the lowest levels to take education so seriously and to have attitudes so much in accord with the aims of the educational system. They want what they are offered and thus they are ideal consumers and their experience is unique and shows up the best and the worst features in the new system.

The best I highlighted in the last chapter when I showed their remarkable achievements. Under the old system of education the majority of English-Punjabis would have been limited to a basic education and to unskilled work (they would have lacked the necessary contacts for a good apprenticeship). Now, given the increased opportunities of the new system, about a quarter will get to university or its equivalent and that is a startling improvement. But, as usual, achievements are just one half of the picture and the over all experience of the English-Punjabis highlights quite as dramatically the worst features that are likely under a system of education based on equal opportunities.

This chapter is about the bad features of the new educational system which are implicit in the experience of the English-Punjabis as they transfer from school to work. I show how the members of an initially united set are firmly differentiated by school and how school taking the place of background ends by being both divisive and restrictive. In it I describe the work done by the English-Punjabis when they are sixteen plus and the majority have finished with school. I hope to show that the new system serves the same society as the old and

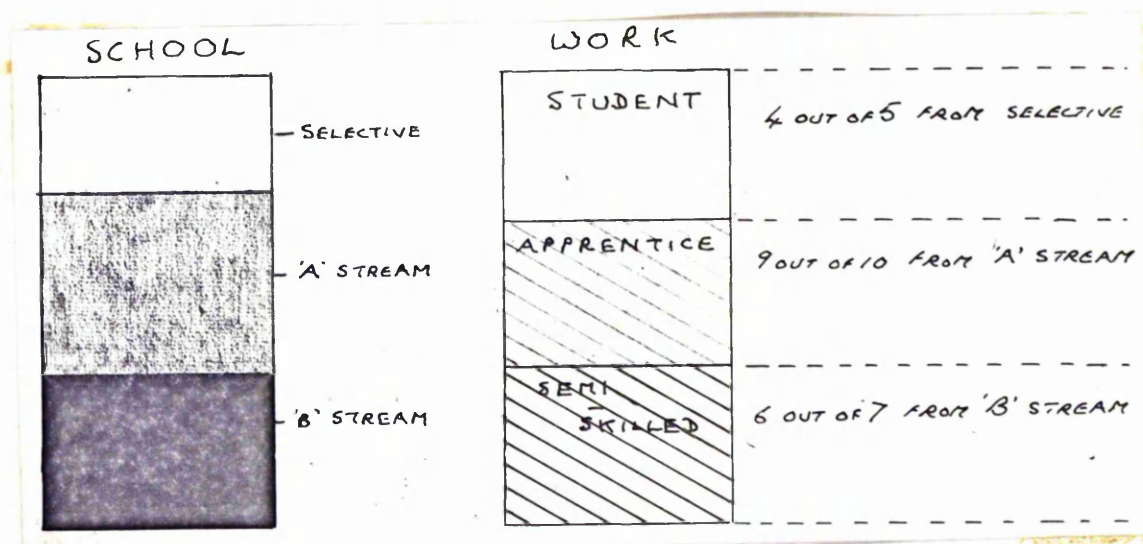
represents no more than a change in the methods of selection in a highly stratified society. I also want to show that the different strata (and recruitment to them) are made no more rational, or just, through being based more directly on education and school than on family background. It is wrong to suppose that because their work (and all that goes with it) depend on the ability they show in school the English-Punjabis are any more suited to it than they would be if, as in the past, their work had depended on their background and wealth.

#### The relation between school and work

In the last chapter I showed how the English-Punjabis started school undivided and at the lowest level and previously (chapter 4 and 5) I have shown that, socially, the English-Punjabis are remarkably unified. School cuts across this unity and by the end of the fourth and last compulsory year the English-Punjabis have been split into three different levels and over the following two years these levels are translated into three distinct levels of work. Thanks to the school the English-Punjabis not only get to university but are divided almost equally between three different groups: the semi-skilled, the apprentices and the sixth form students.

At the end of the fourth year the three different levels in school are: selective, which includes all those at grammar or comprehensive school; the A stream, which includes all those due to take C.S.E.; and the B stream which includes all those who have to leave at the minimum school leaving age. In the following year (the fifth year after starting secondary school) both the selective and the A stream carry on to take exams and virtually all those from the B stream become semi-skilled workers. In the year after that (the sixth year) virtually all those from the A stream who choose to leave school become apprentices and those from the selective school (and some from the A stream) become sixth form students (see Figure 27).

FIGURE 27: Differentiation at school and its relation with work



By the sixth year the three levels established in school remain but, as I show in this chapter, the differences between them have greatly increased. The diagram shows the close correspondence between the levels at work and the levels at school and, in accordance with the new system, that there is selection at all levels of education. The apprentices are selected from the A stream and the semi-skilled workers are selected from the B stream. In this situation the school is responsible not only for selecting those who will stay at school and go to university but also for selecting those who will leave school and become semi-skilled workers. It is important to remember that industry needs the semi-skilled and that the younger they are the cheaper they are.

The lowest level: B stream to semi-skilled

When I was talking about leaving school to one English-Punjabi who was a semi-skilled worker he said bluntly, 'we didn't decide to leave they decided to chuck us out', and true to the tradition of workers' education the B stream had no choice about school, they had to come and they had to go. Anyone in the set who went straight to

work at this level was almost bound to do semi-skilled work in engineering and, for a time, to work either as a machinist or a relay adjuster. During my research I taught fourth year leavers and one English-Punjabi left school expecting to be an electrician but when I met him a month later, sure enough, he was working as a relay adjuster.

They can get these jobs (machinist/relay adjuster) quite easily when they leave school because they are not attractive and the turnover of labour is very high. Also the work involved is both light and repetitive and so is regarded as suitable for young workers of low ability, and of course when they leave at fifteen they have age in their favour; the fact that their labour is the cheapest available is sufficient qualification.

#### Machinist or machine operator

A machinist could be someone who pulls the handle on a drilling machine, or who runs through a series of operations on a lathe, or who grinds the burrs off a piece of metal by holding it to a grinding wheel. In general machine operating is:

'a job which any boy or girl with aptitude can do after a short period of training lasting only hours, days or a few weeks depending on the job. Operators at this level are engaged on production work operating machines which have been pre-set to do a particular job and repeating the process on hundreds or thousands of identical articles. The same operation is performed for days, weeks or even longer until the batch is completed and then the machine is set up for a different job.' (Choice of Careers 22. 1970 : 22)(1).

Work at this level is, as far as possible, de-skilled and repetitive. The machines used are all set up beforehand and the machinist either looks after a number of machines, keeping them fed with a bar of metal or loading and unloading components, or he sticks to one machine loading and unloading and working it himself by pulling levers to various stops and marked scales.

The drilling machine is one of the simplest of such machines and

it is the one most machinists start on (see Figure 28).

A special fixture, or jig, is usually made for the table so that the operator just has to place the component in the jig for it to be in exactly the right position to be drilled; the required tool is fitted to the machine and a stop is fixed so that the drill goes to exactly the right depth. All the machinist has to do is load, pull the lever until it stops, unload, load..... Thus the machinist simply operates the machine and all the skilled work is done by others who set it up, maintain it, make the special tools and fixtures and supervise the work.

This use of skilled men in combination with semi-skilled operators usually goes with batch production and thus work for semi-skilled machinists is bound to be repetitive. A machinist needs dexterity and concentration to help him work as fast and earn as much money as he can. A government pamphlet, issued as a help in careers work, describes the qualities that are needed:

'a machine operator needs machine sense. A heavy handed person using a drilling machine for instance may not only scrap a lot of work but also waste a lot of money and time breaking drills. Another essential quality is to concentrate on the job turning out similar articles for long periods.'  
(Choice of Careers 22 1970 : 25).

One of the most demanding of batch production machines is the capstan lathe (see figure 29) and most of the semi-skilled will 'graduate' to a capstan sooner or later. They come in various sizes and an operator might begin working on a small one soon after leaving school, but to work on a big capstan he usually has to be older and more experienced. In terms of setting and operating the capstan is similar to the drilling machine. The difference with the capstan is that the work is usually heavier and the operations are more complicated.

The setter reads the drawing and then selects and possibly makes the necessary tools and loads them into the turret. He does one job himself, putting on various trips and marks to stop the tools travelling



FIGURE 28: The drilling machine

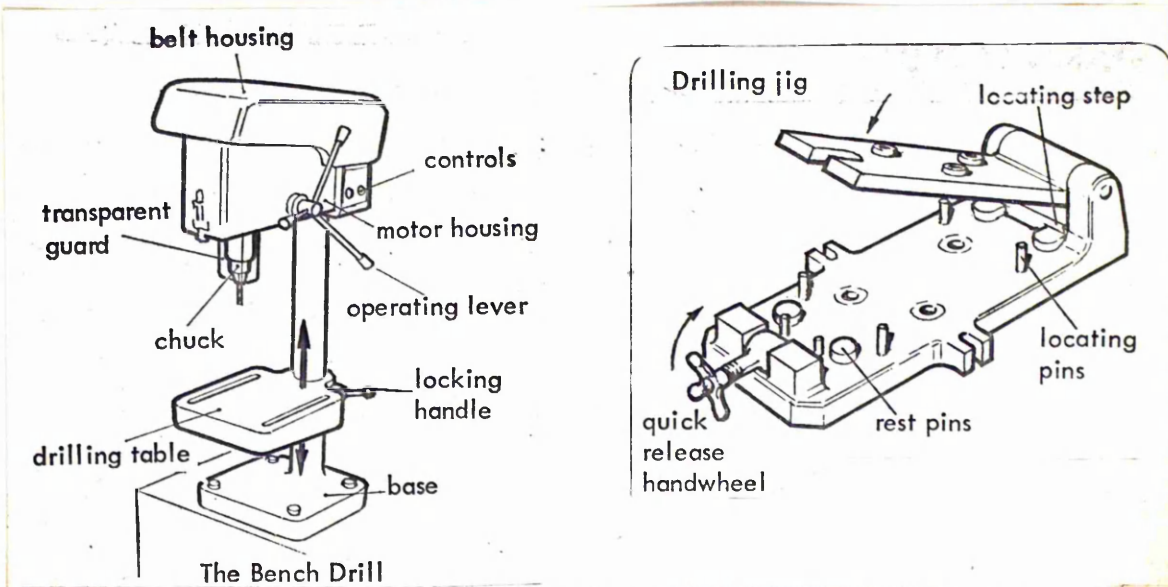
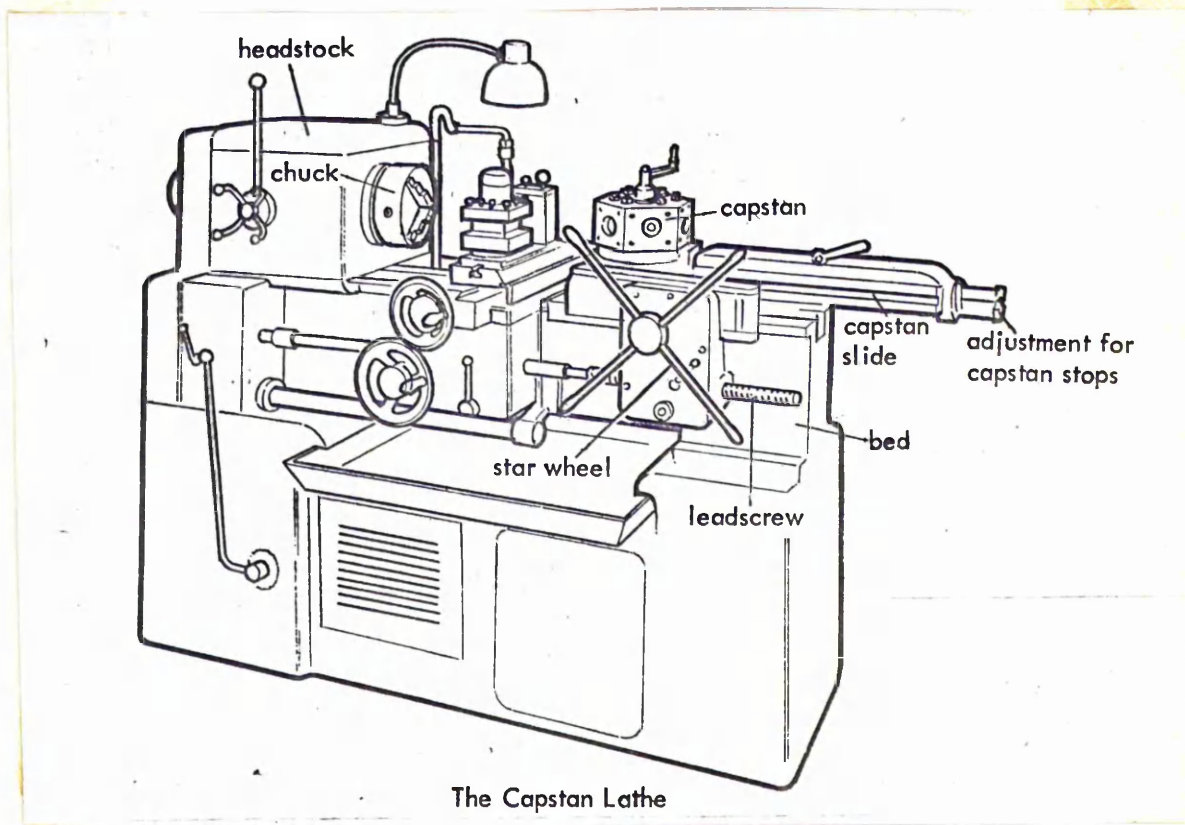


FIGURE 29: The Capstan lathe



too far along the work. He then does the same job with the operator watching and showing him which tools to use, the correct order in which to use them and all the marks he has to turn to. After that the operator does a couple of jobs with the setter watching and is then left to get on with it.

The operator sets the speed, loads the machine by putting the job in the chuck and starts it up. Using the lever he slides the first tool towards the job until he reaches the stop, then he turns the wheel which moves the tool across the job and stops when he comes to the first coloured marker on the wheel. Then he turns the wheel back and the tool is taken away from the job; turns the turret round one place to bring the next tool into operation, changes the speed if necessary and so on. When he has completed the whole sequence of operations he stops the machine, removes and sometimes checks the job and then starts the next.

The work is certainly not easy but a good operator establishes a rhythm and can build up a remarkable speed and detachment.

#### Big firms and small firms

Most of the machinists work in the smaller engineering firms. These firms usually serve the big manufacturers and are to some extent their necessary counterparts; each relies on the other. The big firms tend to be tied up by their own size and organisation and it pays them to use the smaller firms to do some of their work because they have smaller overheads and are far more adaptable.

In a big firm there are large numbers of management and staff and the production department is one amongst many others which are needed to cope with the research and development, sales, welfare, training etc. In contrast the small firms concentrate on production and keep the number of people doing office and management work down to a minimum; their main resources are the machines and the labour. In this way the small firms can produce certain components

(particularly in small batches) both more quickly and more cheaply than the larger firms.

Their relation with the large firms and the competition that exists puts most small firms in an extremely vulnerable position and, because they are so dependent on labour, their high vulnerability directly affects the workers. Small firms have to react quickly to small changes in demand (slump, boom, strike, contracts gained or lost) and the marked ups and downs are passed directly on to the worker. When times are good there are bonuses and overtime and when they are bad there are lay offs, short time and redundancy.

Most small firms keep going on small margins and not much capital and they survive by keeping production costs low, which, especially in their case, means keeping labour costs low. So they take on the youngest workers (whose labour is cheapest) very readily without bothering about school reports; the fact that they leave early is sufficient qualification. It pays them to have them working the lightest and most simple machines (e.g. drilling machines). Older workers are expected to have had some experience, they cost more and so to employ them is more of a risk.

### Conditions

These vary enormously from firm to firm and a lot depends on the people and the machines involved. An operator is bound to be doing repetitive work but he may get some variety from being given work to do on a number of different machines or by being given a series of small batches of work.

An operator usually has to stand to do the work; most machines are noisy, screeching and grinding as the metal is cut away, and the operators are usually dirtied by the continuous flow of oil needed to cool the metal. The work can be dangerous; fingers get cut on the turning metal or on the swarf and bits of metal can get in an operator's eye and some people's skin is affected by the oil.

### Hours and pay

The normal week is forty hours but this can be lengthened or cut depending on the operator and on how much work there is. Clocking in time is 7.30 or 8 o'clock and workers lose a quarter of an hour's pay if they are more than three minutes late. During the eight hour day there are two ten minute breaks one in the morning and one in the afternoon and there is a half hour dinner break.

There are two systems of work and pay: day work where the worker gets paid an hourly rate and possibly a bonus, and piece work where the worker gets a very low hourly rate and is then paid so much for each component he produces. Workers get the adult (and top) rate when they are twenty and until then they get a proportion of the rate which rises each year. Workers who stay with a firm for a whole year are normally entitled to two weeks' holiday pay.

Pay varies from firm to firm, worker to worker and week to week. It can depend on age, overtime, bonus, the price for the job, how much work there is available and how much work gets done. Very few machinists get a steady wage (with holiday pay) because they are apt to change jobs, be unemployed and because in any job the amount of work they do usually varies from week to week.

The best paid machinists and the best paid assembly workers usually work in the big manufacturing firms.

### Training and opportunities

All firms except the very smallest have to pay a levy to the government which they can get back as a grant as long as they do some training; the more training they do, the bigger the grant. With this encouragement some of the bigger firms have made a business of training and even a young semi-skilled worker in a big firm may get the chance of day release to college or be given a year in the firm's training school. But the smaller production firms tend to avoid training and to treat the levy more like a tax. For a number of reasons

(associated with their nature and their position) it does not make sense for them to get involved with the training boards and with sending people to college. For instance:

- (a) they do not want to employ people to look after training and to deal with the training boards (and all the bother and paper work that goes with applying for grants) and so increase the number of people not working on production
- (b) they need the young workers on production, that is why they employed them in the first place
- (c) normally young workers do not want to go to college having had enough of that sort of thing in school
- (d) the young workers do not need to go to college because there is no course that is going to make them better operators, only practice can do that
- (e) there are C.S.E.s recommended for all the college courses and as the young workers are all from the B stream and never took C.S.E. it is fair to assume they would not be able to cope with college.

So altogether college and training boards are OUT and the small firms concentrate on giving their machinists an adequate training of a few hours or days - just enough to get them started in the right way and after that they have to learn by experience.

In the majority of cases the machinist is very effectively cut off from education and is in a hopeless position as far as opportunities at school or college are concerned. Having had to leave school he then cannot go on any sort of craft course or get any trade certificates because these are only open to the people who have been sent to college by their firm; all that he is left with are some O level evening courses. Some of the English-Punjabis did try these courses, doing maths and English, but they never got much closer to O level because, apart from the question of ability, they had the enormous disadvantage

of having to do the learning after a full day's work and because, having come from the B stream, they had no previous experience of such examination work.

The only opportunities the machinists had were at work. They were left with the old hard way up. If a machinist is lucky he will come under a setter, a chargehand or a foreman who will see that he moves around and gets experience on different machines and who will take time to explain and to show the machinist exactly what he is doing, all the way through from reading the drawing to setting the machine. That way a machinist can learn to set up his own machine and takes the first step up by becoming a setter-operator. In general if machinists wanted opportunities they had to prove themselves at work and get experience, then they could either move on to the best paid jobs in the big manufacturing firms or climb up the ladder in a small firm, going from setter-operator, to chargehand, to foreman and, just possibly, to general manager and partner.

But, and it is a large 'but' for the English-Punjabis, thanks to the new and efficient methods of selection and training the opportunities for anyone at this level were very limited (they had already 'proved' they had little ability in school) and most of the top shop floor jobs were taken by ex-apprentices and people with certificates (or at least contacts). A government pamphlet puts any machinist's chances like this:

'In some firms there is occasionally the opportunity for the good operator to train for skilled work within a limited range providing he has the aptitude. Others may be promoted to a supervisory post in charge of a number of operators.'  
(Choice of Careers 22 1970 : 23).

For the English-Punjabis the chances were worse than this and the hard way up was almost non-existent. They had to fight discrimination and in any white dominated firm it was going to be very hard for them to get either the best paid or the supervisory work. Their best chance was likely to come when there was a boom and full time employment.

Then they might move up because of the shortage of labour<sup>(2)</sup>.

### Relay adjuster

This is the other most common job at the lowest level. G.E.C. has a big factory in Foleshill which covers a variety of manufacturing and assembly work to do with telecommunications. A lot of the work is light and repetitive and ideal for young workers of 'low ability' and many of the English-Punjabis from the B stream have worked there for a time as relay adjusters.

A relay is a complicated switch about three inches long (see Figure 31) which is used in telephone circuits and it works in much the same way as the electromagnetic switch in an electric bell circuit. When the current flows through the relay a combination of 'springs' make contact and completes a circuit. By using banks of relays the enormous number of circuits in a telephone system can be controlled.

The springs are about two inches long and half an inch wide and an eighth of an inch thick and they have blobs at the end which are the contact points (see Figure 30). Once the relays have been made these springs have to be adjusted so that they make or break contact as required.

The adjustment is done with a small pair of pliers. Using the pliers, the adjuster takes hold of the spring at the end furthest from the contact points and then runs the pliers along the spring squeezing and bending so that the spring ends up straight and square and with the right 'tension'. By bending one way or the other tension can be either 'put on' or 'taken off'. The tension then has to be checked by a special go and no-go gauge which looks like a small penknife and is used by pushing the blade on the gauge up and down against the spring; one way the blade should give and the other way the spring should give.

To do the work, the adjusters sit at small tables which are arranged in long rows. Each table has a board at the back which

FIGURE 30. A RELAY SPRING.

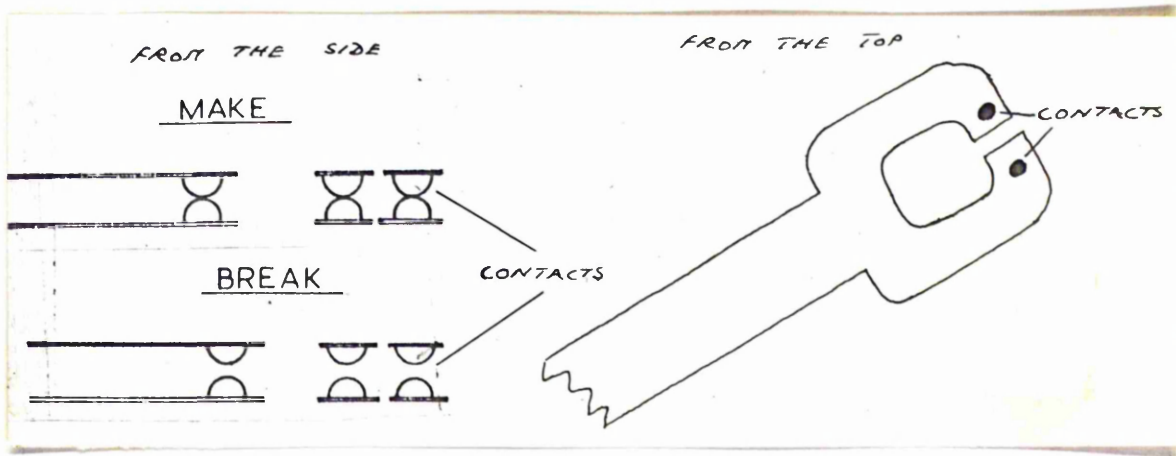
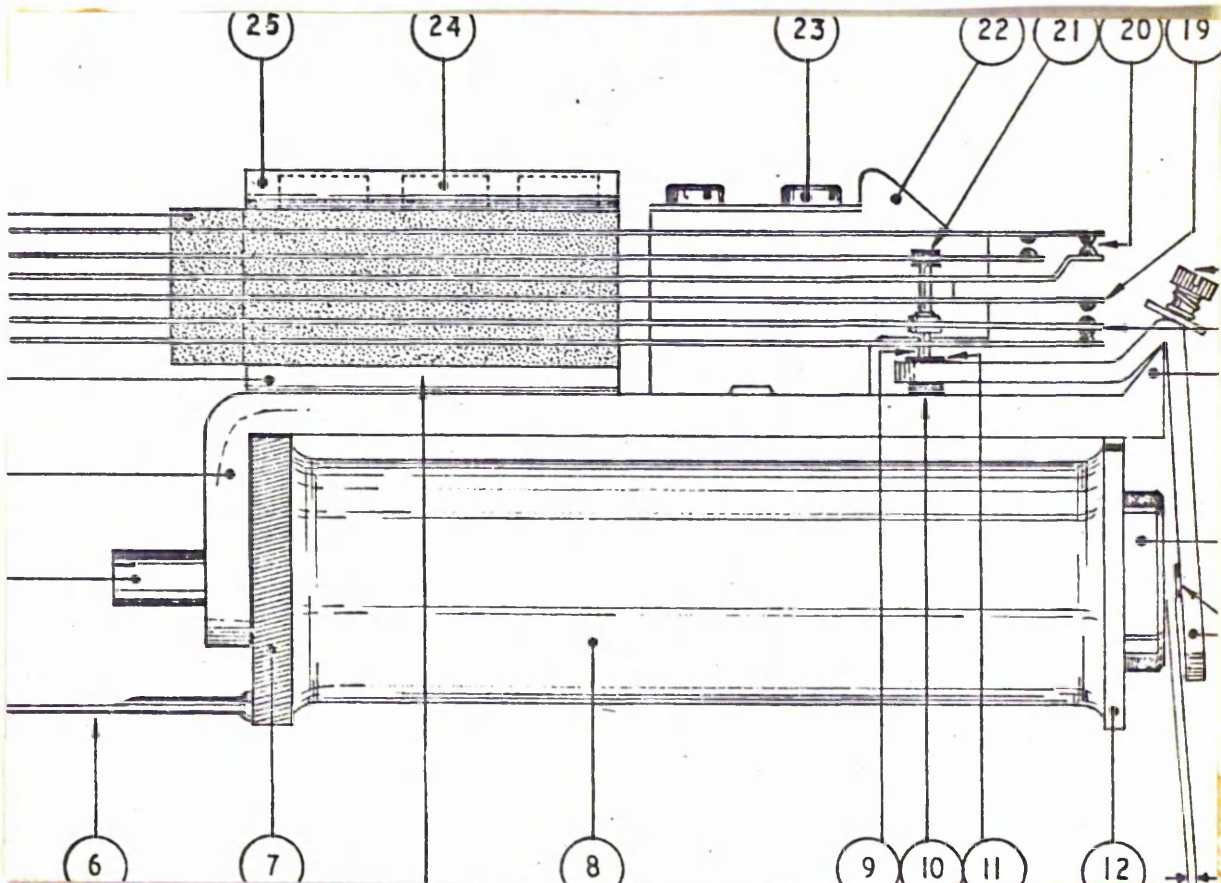


FIGURE 31 A RELAY (2\*)  
(TRAINEES ARE EXPECTED TO NAME THE PARTS)





serves both as a screen, hiding the worker in front, and as a personal notice board. To one side of the table is a box with a batch of relays in it. Near the front edge of the table are two small rubber pads, and when he is working the adjuster rests his elbows on these pads, holds the relay in his left hand, the pliers in the palm, and the gauge between the fingers, of his right hand. For each spring, the adjuster has to run the pliers along the spring and check with the gauge. When he has finished all the springs on one relay he puts it down and takes another from the box.

This tensioning and checking is the basic operation and when he is adjusting a big relay with a lot of springs the adjuster will have to do the operation several times. There are different arrangements and combinations of springs and an adjuster has to know what is required for each one. In terms of skill the job is similar to that of operating a big capstan lathe. Although he works on a far smaller scale, like the machinist, the adjuster has to memorise a complicated series of operations and needs dexterity and concentration. For the machinist the basic operation involves pulling levers and turning wheels and for the adjuster it is bending a spring with a pair of pliers. The government pamphlet says that:

'the work demands nimble fingers, an ability to work at speed and usually the temperament to do the same job all day every day with very little variety.' (Choice of Careers 22 1970 : 32).

#### Conditions, Hours and Pay

Relay adjusting is done in very different conditions to machine operating. The shop floor is clean and quiet and the adjuster does not have to bother with overalls and can do all his work sitting down. The only physical hardship comes from sitting at a table all day and concentrating on something as small as a relay. Some of the English-Punjabis reckoned it was bad for the body to have so little exercise and bad for the eyes to have to do such intricate work.

Adjusters work the same hours as machinists and assuming both are fully employed they end up with roughly the same pay. The adjuster is paid according to piece work; each relay counts as a certain number of units (depending on the number and type of springs involved) and the adjuster gets paid a low basic rate, so much per unit and merit money. As before workers under twenty get a proportion of the adult rate. One advantage of relay adjusting is that there is rarely a shortage of work so the adjuster has more security of work and pay than the machinist. This does not count for much because most adjusters cannot stand the job for very long.

#### Training and opportunities

Adjusting relays is a very specific skill and an adjuster cannot learn by experience in the way a machinist does by starting on a very simple machine and working his way up to the more complicated machines. An adjuster adjusts relays or nothing and as there are no simple relays he has to go through a period of training.

G.E.C. has a special training section for adjusters. A training foreman looks after selection and usually takes on anyone under eighteen (as before, the younger the better) who knows enough English to understand the instructions and preferably enough maths to be able to check his pay. The new worker gets put on a bench near the foreman and is given an instructor and a single spring, a gauge and some pliers. He then starts by learning the basic operation on his one spring and all the different parts of a relay and all the different ways there are of making and breaking contact. Gradually the newcomer learns to adjust all the different types of relays and he moves up the row of tables in the training section and is finally moved on to the main shop floor.

The training is strictly limited to relays and adjusting and does not qualify for any grant. With relay adjusting there is a high turnover and, because there is a steady supply of work, there is an almost

continuous demand for labour and G.E.C. needs adjusters off training and on to full time production as quickly as possible. This means that the training foreman is landed with the difficult job of trying to keep training as short as possible and to produce the maximum number of competent adjusters. The snag is that adjusting is not an easy skill to master and it can be very frustrating learning a job which is tricky and fiddly and highly repetitive and restricting. During training there are pay and time allowances which are designed so as not to discourage the beginner but, even so, the turnover of labour is exceptionally high and it is rare for a new worker to last longer than a year.

The adjusters are in much the same position as the machinists as regards college and education; there is no course that is going to make them better adjusters. Their opportunities are limited and the best they can hope for if they remain adjusters is to be able to work faster and faster and so earn more and more money or to be sent on location with the firm helping with the installation or servicing of a telephone system or to become instructors, chargehands or foremen supervising the work of other adjusters.

#### Other work ..... mechanic

Many of the English-Punjabis from secondary modern school wanted to be motor mechanics and some of them from the B stream managed to get taken on by garages in the hope of getting some training and experience and of ending up as mechanics. But this very rarely happened (in one case out of fifteen) and they were usually given nothing better than labouring work to do (once again they were cheap). As the government pamphlet explains:

'in some garages a boy may go on for years washing down cars and changing tyres with promotion perhaps to forecourt work serving customers with petrol and oil. .... Work in garages can be dirty and poorly paid.' (Choice of Careers 71 1956 : 6).

Most English-Punjabis found themselves faced with similar conditions and prospects and, having started with high hopes, they left after a few months and moved on to factory work as machinists or relay adjusters.

It was normal to change jobs at the lowest level. Out of more than forty who had been machinists only three had stayed with the same firm and only six out of more than twenty-five had stayed on as relay adjusters. Some of the older workers eventually moved out of the factories and did labouring work in brick yards, timber yards, laundries and bakeries where they found they could earn the most money.

#### School and the semi-skilled : two opposing worlds

Most of the values and attitudes promoted by the school are completely irrelevant to the semi-skilled worker. He has none of the security, the respect, the control and authority, the opportunities, the certificates, the career or even the training which go with success in school and towards which education in school appears to be directed (see the sixth form). Semi-skilled work and school are the opposite of each other; for instance in school you are encouraged to stick at what you are doing and to think of the future, but in semi-skilled work there is no future and rather than stick at the same repetitive work it is probably better to change jobs.

Different rules apply because most of the semi-skilled are employed strictly for their labour; when they leave school from the B stream they do not get a job because of their certificates or their school record, they get a job because their labour is cheap. They are involved in selling their labour and that is a business which is completely divorced from the ideals of the school. But it is wrong to see their work as entirely separate from the school for it is the school which has labelled them as low ability and it is through their being low ability that their work is justified. The English-Punjabis who end in the

B stream have been selected for semi-skilled work just as surely as others will be selected for university. By marking them as low ability and making them leave at the minimum age the school as good as supplies their labour. Their low age and their defined low ability makes them attractive to the engineering industry and they have little alternative but to join as semi-skilled workers. Thus for the English-Punjabis it is the school which marks them out as suitable semi-skilled workers. No one doubts that the work of the relay adjuster or the machine operator require little skill or 'ability' and thus the people who have been certified by the school as having low ability are quickly matched with semi-skilled work. Others are then able to justify the match by referring to 'ability' and can go on to say that the repetitive work that they are doing is suitable work for them and finally that it is all they are capable of doing. Whereas in fact whatever ability they have shown in school has nothing to do with whatever ability or non-ability is required for repetitive work. There is no reason to suppose that such work suits an individual from the B stream any better than it would suit an individual from the sixth form. Due to the generalised use of the word ability and the conjunction of 'low-ability' work and 'low-ability' people education at school has the effect of placing one third of the members of the set at a severe disadvantage both in the work they do and the justification for it.

In this way school does its worst for those English-Punjabis who end in the B stream and is a largely negative factor. As semi-skilled workers they face the problem of how best to balance out money and conditions and they have to look for the best price for their labour in the best conditions. At least by changing jobs they were more likely to find what they wanted and they got the variety that was missing from their work. Having sold their time and their labour it looked as if they were best off taking the money and the time that was left and spending them as they liked. Work for money, move about and live

for today, such attitudes (predominant amongst the whites) went with the work. By not being tied to a job or to their work they kept some freedom, independence and control for themselves.

With work and school opposed to each other the right attitudes for school became the wrong attitudes for work. The English-Punjabis who were semi-skilled workers and who had not learnt the new way of work and were still pursuing qualifications and better jobs, studying both at home and at college, seemed to be making the worst of their situation. Others made the best of it by working for money and then either following the pattern set by their parents and spending the money in terms of Punjabi society (work in one society live in the other) or joining the 'bad' ones who lived 'like their time coming now' and went to the cafes. According to parents - and often to the police and to teachers - these were delinquent or maladjusted but they appeared to be well adjusted to the work they were expected to do.

#### The middle level. A stream to apprentice

In the fourth year at school anyone in the A stream could choose whether to leave school or to stay on for another year to take C.S.E. When they had taken C.S.E. those who had done well could choose whether to leave and take an apprenticeship or to carry on with full-time education.

Most of the English-Punjabis stayed on for the extra year and then they left and took a craft apprenticeship with one of the large engineering firms in Coventry e.g. G.E.C., N.C.B., E.M.E.B., British Leyland, Dunlop, Courtaulds, Alfred Herbert.

All of these firms have very good training facilities and most of them have their own training schools where apprentices have the chance to learn away from the pressures of shop floor production work.

The general pattern of training is standard and is laid down by government training boards (see Figure 32). The first year is spent in the training school doing off-the-job training in which the apprentice

is introduced to a wide range of engineering work. At the end of the year the apprentice starts to specialise and between them the firm and the apprentice decide which type of work he would be best doing. For the next two years at least the apprentice takes special training modules connected with the type of work he has chosen (or had chosen for him). The pattern for the complete training is: one year off-the-job, six months on the first training module, six months experience, six months on the second training module, six months experience. The training should finish when the apprentice is twenty and so entitled to the full rate of pay.

**FIGURE 32: The System of Apprentice Training**

FIRST MODULE		SECOND MODULE	
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING PRACTICES		H.1	PRESS TOOL MAKING.
H <sub>1</sub>	MACHINING FOR TOOLMAKING AND EXPERIMENTAL WORK	H.1	DIE MAKING.
H <sub>2</sub>	TURNING. I.	H.2	TURNING. II.
H <sub>3</sub>	MECHANICAL FITTING. I.	H.1 or H.3	INSTRUMENT FITTING.
H <sub>4</sub>	MILLING. I.	H.1 or H.3	MECHANICAL FITTING. II.
H <sub>5</sub>	GRINDING.	Any one of H.1 to H.5	INSPECTION AND MEASURE
		H.1 or H.2 or H.4	JIG BORING.
		H.1 or H.2 or H.4	BORING.
		H.4	MILLING. II.
		H.1 or H.2 or H.4 or H.5	MACHINE TOOL SETTING.

For a typical module of training the training board provides:

- a/ A skill specification indicating the range of skill to be developed during training and the standards to be reached at its completion.
- b/ A training specification setting out the details of the training to be given.
- c/ An instruction manual indicating methods of developing each element of skill contained in the training schedule.
- d/ A set of sample performance tests which are to be completed successfully during the progress of the training.
- e/ A recommendation for further education.
- f/ A log book in which the trainee records the training received.'

(E.I.T.D. 1968: 7).

Once he has completed this module of training the apprentice gets a six month 'period of controlled experience ... in a production environment' so that he can practise the skills acquired. During this time the apprentice should gain maturity and dexterity 'under the industrial pressures of cost and time'; the work he does should 'be entered in his log book and be certified by his supervisor.' Having had his six months of experience the apprentice then moves on to his second training module and finally his second period of production experience.

Throughout his training the apprentice is expected to go to college:

'It is a feature of the scheme of craft training that paid day or block release is given for a suitable course of study throughout training' (E.I.T.D. 1968 : 7).

The craft apprentice who gets the proper practical training and experience with his firm goes on a craft studies course at college which is meant to be the educational complement to industrial training<sup>(3)</sup>.

The syllabus includes mechanical craft principles, related studies, communication, general studies, and project activities. The whole course is divided into three parts and at the end of each part there are written exams. The apprentice must pass these and have a satisfactory rating in craft project work before moving on to the next part. If all goes well an apprentice should take one year to get part one, two years to get part two and one more year to get part three; four years altogether. There are similar courses for technician apprentices (those destined for non-manual work) and if he does very well and proves himself academically suitable a craft apprentice may be transferred to a technician's course.

The board requires apprentices to go to college for the first year but after that 'exemption may be granted in exceptional circumstances' (E.I.T.D. 1968 : 10). Generally firms are very keen on college and they take the college record of an apprentice and the



certificates he gets as useful measures of his character and ability and can check through them that he is working at the right level. The apprentice who is doing very well at college and who gets promoted to the technicians' course (and possibly beyond that to a degree course) would also be promoted at work and move from craftsman to technician and ultimately to technologist and to the level of professional engineer. Very unlikely but just possible.

All the Punjabis who were apprentices followed a pattern of training similar to that I have described. The apprentices who got least off-the-job training were the motor mechanics because most garages did not have training centres and so until recently virtually all their training was done on the job, i.e. in the garage helping a skilled mechanic. Now a centre for motor mechanics has been set up at one of the colleges with well-equipped workshops and lecture theatres and all the apprentices will go there for their studies and their off-the-job training.

#### Contract and security

A pamphlet from Courtaulds explains that

'an apprenticeship is a contract ... in which the company promises to spend an agreed number of years teaching an apprentice a skilled occupation, a trade, so that, provided the apprentice fulfills his part of the contract, at the end of the agreed time he will have become proficient at his chosen work.'

This contract plus the fact that he is working in a big firm where he can expect strong union protection gives the apprentice great security. Only in exceptional circumstances will an apprentice lose his job and only one out of more than forty English-Punjabis lost an apprenticeship, being sacked after repeatedly skipping college and work.

#### Hours, pay, conditions and opportunities

Apprentices work the standard eight hour day, forty hour week and, with the security, their work and pay are usually steady. Of all the workers they are the least likely to be affected by short time, lay

offs, redundancy or strike action and they are also unlikely to do much overtime or piece work. Pay is fairly standard from firm to firm and varies more with age than with anything else. Like other young workers apprentices get a proportion of the adult rate.

Whilst his job and pay are secure the actual work the apprentice does and the conditions he works in are exceptionally varied. During his training he will do various production work, he will cover most of the basic skills of engineering and the different machines; he will do writing and studying and bookwork and he will move from the shop floor, to the workshop, to the classroom and lecture theatre.

In the work and pay of the apprentice and the semi-skilled there is a direct contrast: one has a steady job and steady money and does various work, and the other probably changes jobs, has ups and downs with work and pay and does repetitive work. Over a whole year the apprentice and the semi-skilled can expect to earn the same amount. The semi-skilled only gain when they get work which has a good piece time rate or good overtime. Also those who are strong enough to do heavy work such as labouring in the brickyards gain because as long as they look old enough and can do the work employers are not too bothered about age and are willing to pay the full rate.

Craft apprentices normally end up as skilled workers and they should get the best paid jobs and work in the best conditions on the shop floor. They are also the most likely to get the supervisory jobs of chargehand and foreman. Their opportunities to do better than that are limited and depend mostly on their being able to start up their own business or on their doing well enough at college to get promoted to office and white collar work and possibly to executive or managerial positions. Such opportunities for promotion are worse for Punjabis because most firms are reluctant to put Indians above the whites.

Apprentices carry on from school

Unlike semi-skilled work the work of the apprentice is very much in keeping with school.

First of all apprentices have to stay for an extra year and take C.S.E. and then they go to a training school and to college. They get certificates at college and they get a certificate when they have finished their training and throughout they are taking tests and filling in log books. On top of all this the apprentices belong to big firms which are rather like the school in the institutional interest they show in their development. Apprentices are encouraged to use all the facilities of the firms and colleges they belong to and to show their 'ability and character' in as many ways as possible. Some firms have recreation centres and apprentice associations:

'In addition to the normal sporting and social activities of the company there is an apprentice association engaged in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. All apprentices are eligible to join and participate in their respective interests.'  
(G.E.C.) (4).

At Morris there is an apprentice association run by the apprentices themselves:

'They elect their own officials who organise regular activities including dinners, dances and visits to places of interest.'  
(British-Leyland (Austin-Morris)).

And at Jaguar:

'the apprentice association organises a wide variety of social activities. It is run by the apprentices for the benefit of apprentices. All are expected to join.' (British-Leyland (Jaguar)).

Like the schools, firms set out to look after the welfare of their apprentices. As an apprentice:

'the individual finds himself part of a group in which he may share his interests and problems with his colleagues and instructors' (British Leyland). And... 'a close liaison is maintained by the welfare department and the training office .....contact is also maintained with their parents. In addition the apprentices are encouraged to discuss their

problems and ideas with the training officer whenever they feel the need to do so' (G.E.C.).

Like the schools, the firms are on the look out for ability and character. Apart from the apprentice associations and the social and sporting activities, 'other activities designed to develop character are encouraged' (British Leyland). One such activity was a twenty-four hour endurance and initiative marathon for one hundred Coventry apprentices. Also in keeping with school firms kept detailed records about their apprentices:

'The apprentice training officer keeps records of the academic and practical progress of each apprentice' (British Leyland Austin-Morris). 'Progress reports are kept at every stage of the apprenticeship so that a complete picture of a boy's ability is built up and special qualities can be noted for further development' (G.E.C.).

To cap the records and certificates there may even be prizes:

'Annual prize giving day linked with parents day is a time of ..... recognition for the accomplished apprentices who receive awards and congratulations from the directors of the company' (Jaguar).

And apart from the prizes there is still the freedom of the city for all those who complete a full apprenticeship in Coventry.

Finally there are the opportunities and the career:

'The training officer is readily available to advise the trainee on his future career' (British Leyland). 'The scheme of apprenticeship is designed to allow the individual to move into the career best suited to his abilities, that gives him the satisfaction of performing an important task well' (British Leyland). 'There are outstanding opportunities for those with the character and ability to profit from them' (British-Leyland Austin-Morris).

#### The company as the new master

In the first chapter I explained how a craft apprentice used to learn his skill from a master craftsman to whom he was bound for a fixed period of seven years. There was a contract which laid out far reaching obligations between an apprentice and his master who had an

overall stake in the life of the apprentice. He was regarded as 'one of the master's products on which the community would judge him as severely as on his wares' (Wellens 1968 : 57). At the end of his training the apprentice not only became a skilled man himself but he gained admission into a restricted trade and a select class of men, the craftsmen and freemen of the city of Coventry.

More than a hundred years later when the English-Punjabis were apprentices they were under contract to a company and were controlled by a variety of skilled men and by training boards, training schools and colleges. At the end of their time they still became craftsmen and freemen of the city; but for them the company was the master and took a wide ranging interest in their general character and ability; they were the company's products.

#### All or nothing

'The apprenticeship system.....implies a division of young workers into two distinct groups, an apprenticeship group which receives training of five years duration and an outside group which receives as of right, none' (Wellens 1968 : 25-6).

'The apprenticeship principle involves an all or nothing approach' (Wellens 1968 : 25-6).

Both these statements are true for the English-Punjabis. Whilst the semi-skilled worker gets the minimum training to cover the job he is doing and is expected to go on doing, the apprentice has to stay at school, go through an extensive course, be bound to a company, study at college, keep a log book with notes on his work, do tests and have the company keep records on him.

It is not necessary to go to such lengths to teach industrial skills. The arrangement is completely unbalanced and the extent of the training for the apprentice and the division between the apprentice and the semi-skilled seem to have more to do with restricted trades and with special classes and stratification than with the learning of any particular skill. The division is based on the difference in ability

which has been established by the school. In the case of the English-Punjabis those from the B stream become semi-skilled workers while those from the A stream can become apprentices and get a complete training, learning about many aspects of their work. Yet there is nothing to show that the ability and division established by the school bears any relation to an individual's ability and motivation to learn about his work and to acquire a skill. Industry concentrates training on a limited number of people who are selected from a certain ability range at school. The result is that many who wish and are able to acquire a skill are barred from doing so and many who qualify for it find the training unnecessarily extensive. Rather than give all the training to one level of ability (as measured by the school) it would be better if training, like education, were widely available and that all who wished to acquire a skill were allowed and encouraged to seek training (in and after school) specifically directed towards the job they wanted to do. Amongst the English-Punjabis it did not make sense that all children had the right to a basic education but that only some had the right to learn about their work and to acquire skills.

#### Training and school

Traditionally schools have been particular about making a distinction between education and training and the purpose of schools has been to educate people rather than to train them. But the English-Punjabis show that training and skills have a lot more to do with schools than is supposed. The way of the apprenticeship is the way of the school (just as the way of the semi-skilled is not) and the whole edifice of industrial training is based on the school; whether English-Punjabis become apprentices or semi-skilled workers depends solely on the ability they show in school.

Many people get caught out by the distinction between education and training and by the close but supposedly non-existent connection between school and industry. Because it does not deal in such things

they cannot get trained or learn a skill in school and when they leave they cannot learn a skill unless they did well at education when they were in school. Anyone who does not like the education provided in school or is not very good at it is stuck.

The highest level: Selective to sixth-form

All the English-Punjabis at this level choose to stay on to O levels (or C.S.E.). After taking their examinations most of them had the choice between more school, going to college or getting an apprenticeship. Most of them decided to stay at school and so they carried on to the sixth form.

Education in school is largely directed towards the sixth-form. It is there that the English-Punjabis encountered education in its broadest sense (the education that is meant to be so different from training), a proper academic and social education. It is in the sixth form that the values promoted by the school and held by the English-Punjabis are most clearly expressed. As sixth form students individuals are allowed a good deal of freedom, independence and control and are expected to exercise due responsibility; they also have wide ranging opportunities and as much choice as possible. To a large extent they are allowed to choose how to spend their time and how to do their work. They can choose their own officers and they have most choice in the subjects they do and they are encouraged to discuss and to make up their own minds about things that affect their lives in and out of school. More than any other pupil it is the sixth former who has the freedom of the school. In the school timetable about five hours are set aside specifically for each subject and another two hours are set for games and general studies. The rest of the time is left to the student to spend as he likes. It is hoped that as he has so much control over his life he will show his responsibility and spend his time sensibly, not only studying but also getting exercise, pursuing any other interests he may have or just talking and relaxing quietly.

Most of the English-Punjabis went to a comprehensive school just north of Foleshill. Here the sixth form is to a large extent separate from the rest of the school. A small part of the buildings is specially reserved for the sixth form and students have their own lavatories, cloakroom and common room; their part is next to the headmaster's room and that of his deputy and also next to the library. The sixth form had its own organisation. There was a teacher who was nominally in charge but students were expected to take responsibility for most of the day to day running of their own affairs. They kept their own register and were trusted to mark themselves absent or present; they did not have to go to any assembly, they elected their own head students as well as the officers for various social and financial committees. They were allocated a certain amount of money to spend as they chose on various special facilities and activities. They looked after their own common room and saw to the provision of coffee and snacks and they arranged dances, talks and visits.

In school, students normally worked for three periods of one and a half hours each. They started at 9.30 and worked until eleven; they then had a thirty minute break before they started again and worked until dinner at one o'clock. They had an hour for dinner and they finished off the day by working from two until 3.30. They did most of their work sitting at desks in classrooms with teachers, but during each day they got a break from the classroom and bookwork when they either did something practical or they had a games period or a free period which they could spend more or less as they liked, either studying or relaxing in the common room.

On top of the work they did in school, they were expected to take work home with them and to spend another two to three hours a week on each subject. Teachers usually set this extra work and then left it to the students to decide when to do it.

The students got tested on their subjects throughout the two years and at the end they took the A level examination.



Hours, pay, conditions and opportunities: open school

The students' conditions are clearly very comfortable. They have the privileged use of most school facilities (i.e. teachers, rooms, materials and all the sports, science and craft facilities) and they have a separate recreational area. To a far greater extent than others at school or at work sixth form students are free to come and go as they like and to work or not to work. For the student the emphasis is on choice, he can take school or leave it, it is up to him. If he chooses wrongly and skips school or neglects his study then he will be told to leave. This happened to one of the English-Punjabis who left in his second year in the sixth form and got a good job in the employment office.

All the English-Punjabis who were sixth form students were expected to wear school uniform. So in contrast to the semi-skilled or the apprentice, who either wear their own clothes or an overall to do their work, the sixth form student has to wear grey trousers, white shirt, school tie and blazer.

The sixth form student has an average of four hours work timetabled each day and he gets over thirteen weeks' holiday each year.

Semi-skilled workers get paid for each hour they work or each component they produce and the apprentice gets paid by the week. Students do not get paid.

A bonus for the sixth form students is that they all work in mixed company whereas the apprentices and the semi-skilled do not.

The most obvious opportunity for the student is to go to university where the life he enjoys in the sixth form continues with more freedom and more facilities (and no uniform). After university the student has the opportunity to take up a profession say as a doctor or as an engineer. For the professional engineer 'the prospective employment opportunities are too numerous to mention in detail'

(Choice of careers 92, 1959 : 46). Usually anyone with a degree will get the best paid jobs, at the highest levels, and will work in the best conditions. A levels also serve as the qualifications for entry into the engineering industry as students or technologists who either fill managerial posts or have responsibility for particular aspects of design, production and research.

### Conclusion

The sixth form is at the top of an educational hierarchy. At the bottom are the semi-skilled who get the minimum of training and education, in the middle are the apprentices who get the maximum of training and whose education is crammed into an eight hour day in college (any freedom in that is likely to be restricted to liberal studies) and at the top is the sixth form student who is left alone in school to be fully educated. The element of training in their education lies in the privileged positions they have in school which prepares them for the jobs they expect to get.

The severe divisions and restrictions which I have described are the overall result of school for the English-Punjabis. Faced with these divisions it is hard to argue that education in school is a broadening process. Education in such a stratified society is as much a limiting process as anything. It has always been so for the majority whether they went to elementary or secondary modern schools and there is no reason why it should not be so in the comprehensive school. Schools are not independent of society and they are likely to remain divisive and restrictive as long as society remains so highly stratified. Through school and through their education English-Punjabis are limited to a particular level; some are limited to semi-skilled work and others are limited to sixth form work. It is part of the nonsense of education that students whose whole experience is limited by school and by privilege can be thought to be in the sixth form to broaden their minds or to develop any other aspect of

themselves. The English-Punjabis realise that they are in the sixth form to become managers and doctors and to be detached from factory work.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

- (1) These careers pamphlets are published by H.M.S.O.
- (2) Repeatedly I came across the belief that the Asians were not able to do work at any other level from the one they were working at (and that the whites were not able to or did not want to) and this convenient belief was backed up by the evidence from the school. They had shown their ability in school and that was that.
- (3) In the engineering industry's manual on training for engineering craftsmen a clear distinction between education and training is made. The words are written in italics:

'The education of craftsmen will be continued beyond the stage reached at secondary school by attendance at a college for a course of further education which matches the training course.'
- (4) These quotations are taken from the recruiting pamphlets of various local firms.

### CONCLUSION

In spite of what happened to them in school, the English-Punjabis were a remarkably united set of people (see chapter 3) and this plus the fact that they and their families were not stratified according to the norms of English society helped to highlight the irrationality of the differences created by the school.

In English society work and education are important measures of social status and differences of work and education which are common in Punjabi families tend to disrupt English families. Whereas it would be remarkable in English society, it is quite likely that a farmer, an unskilled worker and a doctor will be members of the same joint family and enjoy a similar social status in Punjabi society (see chapter 2). Thus because the English-Punjabis and their families are still very much members of Punjabi society they are able to absorb many of the differences of education and work imposed by the school.

The fact that the three levels I have described co-existed so readily amongst the English-Punjabis made it all the more difficult to account for them. If the levels had been kept apart (as they normally are in English society) they might have appeared to be more reasonable and easier to justify; but it was hard to see any reason in them or on what they were based when constantly meeting friends or members of the same family who were at different levels. There were, for instance, three members of the same family, one who spent his day grinding burrs off pieces of metal, another who spent his day learning about machines and another who spent his in the sanctuary of the sixth form, what they did and their circumstances being simply the result of what they had done in school. Yet the ability they had shown there was not sufficient reason for each being

restricted to one particular level and denied access to other levels. The more English-Punjabis I met and talked to the clearer it became that, although it was the school which had decided the level they were to occupy, the different levels of education and work had less to do with ability than with the demands of a stratified society and that, in dividing them, the educational system was fulfilling those demands just as it had always done. What had changed was that membership of the different levels (or strata) was now justified falsely by education and ability rather than background.

I have suggested that the English-Punjabis relate to a new educational system. Increased opportunities were available (though not at the time in a single school) and they (and not the whites) had the attitudes required to take advantage of the opportunities. The best of the new system lies in those opportunities and the success that some of the English-Punjabis achieve and the worst lies in the divisions and restrictions imposed on them by the school. These divisions and restrictions are similar to those that existed in the old educational system and they have their foundation in the society of which the schools are a clearly subordinate part. As long as that society remains stratified and the more people are measured for work by the ability they show in school, then schools will remain divisive and restrictive and will become increasingly involved in the selection process. Even so the experience of the English-Punjabis does point to changes which could be made both in terms of the best, by increasing opportunities still further, and in terms of the worst, by reducing the extreme divisions that result from school. In the case of the English-Punjabis the major fault of the schools lay in the predominant and insular view of education as being directed towards personal development. Ideally the purpose of education might be 'to turn out decent people who know how to live' (page 100) but realistically, as the English-Punjabis recognised very clearly, it was not. It was work and

training and not character that were determined by education and by reserving education to themselves and largely ignoring work and training the schools tended to negate the ideal education they sought to give. That members of the set from the B stream should get semi-skilled work was the inevitable result of the school labelling them and making them leave at the youngest age. Yet the school managed to obscure this by treating them while they were in school as if they were faced with a choice of careers (they had extensive careers advice) and would be better off starting work; then forgetting about them when they did. By recognising their responsibility for the work and training of the semi-skilled and giving them the choice of staying at - or even returning to - school where they would have the opportunity of training and qualifications, schools stood less danger of becoming labour exchanges and were more likely to offer an education relating to personal development. At the other end of the scale where schools did accept full responsibility, the sixth form level, students were provided with the best education which was regarded as something entirely separate from work and training. In fact, as the English-Punjabis recognised, the privilege, responsibility, authority and choice involved in students' education made it a suitable preparation (training) for their future status. Few were likely to accept manual or low-level non-manual work after such an education. In the sixth form as surely as in the B stream education was directed towards a particular social stratum.

People will inevitably be labelled and differentiated by the education they get in schools but my conclusion is that the extent of the differentiation and the certainty of the labelling, as shown by the English-Punjabis, is harmful; and that there is a basic contradiction in a system of education based on equality of opportunity that results in such extreme differentiation. In chapter six I showed that, even when there are equal opportunities available, differences in background are bound to affect achievement in school and lead to them not being

equally taken (i.e. whites and Punjabis). Thus, in the case of the English-Punjabis, the differences in their English background will be based on the school and an educational system which is aiming towards equality of opportunity is establishing the very differences that will ensure that the opportunities are not equally taken.

I assume that schools will continue to select and stratify but I see no reason why they should do so with such haste and certainty or why the fact that they do so should not be recognised by associating education in schools more directly with work and training. I think the aim, at least within the schools, should be to increase the opportunities at all levels which means aiming for the minimum of streaming and the maximum of choice and to openly acknowledge the close connection and the blurred divisions between education, work and training, seeing all three as legitimate parts of a school's curriculum.

The stratifications imposed on the English-Punjabis by the school are those of the class system. I have previously explained that whatever his attitudes, whatever his involvement with Punjabi society, an immigrant who earns wages in industry as an unskilled manual worker is very definitely a member of the working class and English-Punjabis by virtue of their education and work also have clear positions within the class system. However the Punjabi immigrant's position is complicated by the positions that he has in other systems of stratification besides class, namely race and caste stratification. I do not consider that race and caste are subordinate to class but rather that the two coexist, with class, as alternative systems of stratification. As 'blacks' and as members of a dominant caste, the Punjabis have very definite positions in terms of race and caste stratification and these positions are likely to affect their class position in England. In his book 'Race relations in sociological theory' (Rex 1970), Rex seeks to establish race relations as a definite area of study distinct from class. He writes that:



'where colour discrimination is consistent with the metropolitan culture and value system it is likely to operate as a means of classifying the colonial immigrant and placing him in a state of relative rightlessness outside the stratification order' (page 110).

I agree with Rex that race is a distinct system of stratification but in English society, in which colour discrimination is certainly consistent with the metropolitan value system and operates as a means of classifying colonial immigrants, Punjabis are not placed outside the stratification order, rather race stratification provides an alternative means of stratification placing the Punjabis at a disadvantage within the existing stratification order (i.e. class system). Their race position affects their class position and means that they will suffer discrimination within each class. Whatever class position an English-Punjabi had after school he was likely to be affected by discrimination. At the higher levels (e.g. skilled and non-manual work) certain jobs were barred to Punjabis because of the likely resentment of white workers or because Punjabis were thought to lack the ability to think for themselves and to rely too much on well rehearsed ideas and methods. Such a pedestrian nature could supposedly be explained by the rote learning methods common in Indian society. At the lowest levels employers often preferred to have Punjabis working for them because they tended to work harder and be more reliable than the whites (the same pedestrian qualities). Thus in each stratum within the class system Punjabis were fit for the lower levels and not fit for the higher levels. In this way race stratification will clearly work against any form of assimilation. Rex points out that because of race, a black immigrant (i.e. West Indian/Asian) is doubly differentiated from a white immigrant (i.e. Polish/Irish).

'He is more severely confined to the position of replacement worker and resident (i.e. filling the worst jobs and houses) and second he cannot expect with confidence that his children or grandchildren will have been accepted into the stratification system of the host society' (Rex 1970 : 109).

The third stratification system that affects the Punjabis is that of the Punjab. I take this system to be primarily one of caste and in it, as well as within any existing class system, the Punjabis have a high position. They are the traditional rulers and landowners and they expect to become administrators, lawyers and doctors (chapter 2). The Punjabi stratification thus provides a positive alternative to class and race stratification. They are able to regard class and race as subordinate to caste. Class stratification can be regarded in a purely functional manner, their class position in England (as it may do in Punjabi society) enabling Punjabis to earn money, power and status as a contribution to their caste (e.g. family) position in Punjabi society.

I can show the relation between race, class and caste by giving brief accounts of the careers of three brothers. The brothers are the children of one of the earliest Punjabi immigrants and they were all born in Coventry; Amrik is the eldest brother, Kuldeep is the middle brother and Harminder is the youngest. Amrik passed his 11+ and went to comprehensive school and on to university. After university he applied for a large number of jobs many of which he failed to get due to racial discrimination. Finally he took a research post at university and he now has a middle class position in English society which gives him access to various resources which he can use to advance his position in Punjabi society; increasingly he is doing this. Kuldeep transferred to comprehensive school at 13+, his interests were mainly painting, music and English and in the sixth form, unlike other Punjabis he studied arts subjects and helped whites organise various activities such as dances, outings and debates. When I first met Kuldeep he tended to be separate from other Punjabis in the sixth form but, later, towards the end of his sixth form career he supported the black power movement and aligned himself firmly with his fellow Punjabis. When he left school he went to art college for a time before

returning to India to marry and to relieve his younger brother, Harminder, in looking after the family's interests in India. Harminder did not get to comprehensive school at either 11+ or 13+ (he missed some primary schooling) and left school early when he was in the B stream and returned to India. There he helped look after the land until he was relieved by Kuldip whereupon he returned to Coventry (now with a wife) to join his brother Amrik and to work in one of the local factories.

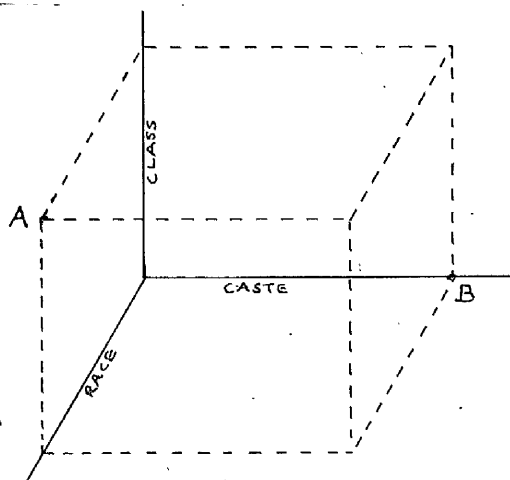
Between them the three brothers have faced three systems of stratification and have tried to reach the best possible position for themselves and their joint family. Amrik achieved a middle class position through his education but he found it difficult to get a suitable job because of his racial position. He is now using his class position to improve his position in Punjabi society. The next brother, Kuldip, became increasingly aware of racial discrimination and took race as the basis of his realignment with his fellow Punjabis. His interest and educational achievement in art were something of a dead end, though architecture was a possibility the chances of his improving his position through art were not good (rather the reverse), and he went to India to look after the family's interests there. The youngest, Harminder, was in the B stream in his third year at secondary school and so had no chance of getting to comprehensive school, was likely to become a semi-skilled worker and stood a risk of becoming increasingly involved in the type of delinquent behaviour associated with lower streams. Therefore, instead of staying at school until he had to leave at fourteen, he went to India and lost nothing by helping to look after the family land until he could return to Coventry (safely married) and start work just as his father had done thirty years earlier earning money for the joint family by working in the factories.

In his thesis (Thompson 1970), Thompson draws attention to the visits to the Punjab and the marriages that are arranged for English-

Punjabis. He was looking for differences between the generations of Punjabi immigrants and for evidence that suggested that they were moving away from Punjabi society towards English society, i.e. by adopting English ways. To this end he distinguished between first generation immigrants, child migrants and second generation immigrants and he saw the visits and marriages in a functional light as major correctives to behaviour and checks against children becoming too English. Whilst I think he was right in seeing visits and marriages as very important ways by which children could be involved in Punjabi society, I think Thompson tended to rely too much on models derived from the assimilation of white immigrants (i.e. Price 1963) ignoring race stratification as a factor and tending to think in terms of a simple dichotomy between English and Punjabi societies with individuals and generations having a place on some sort of continuum between the two societies.

I prefer to think in terms of a three dimensional model with the three dimensions (or axes) representing the stratification systems of class, race and caste (see Figure 33).

FIGURE 33: Three dimensional model of class, race and caste



On this model a white who has a high class position (A) (e.g. doctor, lawyer) is on the opposite corner to the Punjabi Jat who is a semi-skilled worker (B). The Punjabi may improve his class position

through education but the racial discrimination he is likely to suffer encourages him to use his improved class position in terms of his caste position (e.g. Amrik). The semi-skilled worker having both a low class and race position is able to see both in terms of his caste position, simply taking the money he earns to improve his family position (e.g. Harminder). According to this model assimilation will only occur when the dimensions of caste and race are absent and thus all are represented on the one class axis. When I was doing my research there was absolutely no indication that either dimension was likely to disappear.

For the English-Punjabis the dimension of caste and their high position within the stratification system of the Punjab were all important. In this thesis I have shown that much of their success in school was due to attitudes and expectations derived from their Punjabi and caste background and to the spur that was provided by the contrast between this background and demonstrably low class and race positions occupied by their parents. Without the dimension of caste the English-Punjabis would have been in a highly disadvantaged position, a position similar to that of most West Indian immigrants.

Whilst the Punjabi immigrants were exposed to class stratification through school and work there were very few signs that the class position they held had much effect on their attitudes or their relationships with other Punjabis. The other dimensions of caste and race modified the effect of class stratification. Amongst the English-Punjabis the only signs lay in the tendency for delinquent behaviour (and groups) to be associated with members of the set who had been in the B stream at school and in the slight separation of sixth form students in that they took less part in peer group activities and sometimes expressed a different attitude towards school (see chapter 4). But these signs were very vague and as I have explained the members of the set were remarkably united and relationships cut across the divisions created by school and work. The caste dimension reduced

the significance of a low class position (anyone in this position could work in the same way and be entitled to the same respect as their parents) and the race dimension reduced the advantages of a high class position. As far as the English-Punjabis were concerned their high caste position served to push them up the class axis (through success in school) and to protect them against the worst effects of the low positions on the class and race axes. In the future I think class stratification will very slowly increase in importance as a factor determining attitudes and relationships amongst Punjabis, the extent to which it does will be a measure of their assimilation within English society and of the decreasing importance of race and class stratification.

For the English-Punjabis socialisation in terms of English society comes mainly through the school and the divisions that are imposed through education. For them class stratification is to a large extent determined by the school and thus the relation they have with school is far removed from that which working class children had with their schools and which I described in the first chapter.

One English-Punjabi, when explaining the purpose of school and education, gave an indication of the change and the present importance of school in terms of social stratification in England when he said:

'Well if there wasn't any school at all there wouldn't be any good jobs would there and therefore everyone would be the same really. There wouldn't be no lower class and top class.'

For one English-Punjabi at least a complete reversal with class depending on school.

POSTSCRIPT 1976

The research for this thesis and most of the writing up was finished in 1972. Since then there have been significant changes in education. Firstly the school leaving age has been raised so that all children now have to stay for a fifth year in school and many more are able to take C.S.E.; and secondly Broad Heath and Frederick Bird schools have been closed and replaced by Sidney Stringer comprehensive school. Sidney Stringer is an impressive new school, it is near the city centre, it has excellent facilities, is imaginatively run and it seems to be making the very best of its situation. The sixth form in the school is open to all who are sufficiently motivated to work and use the facilities.

Clearly these changes will affect the specific relation between school and work that I described in the last chapter. But I do not think they change the nature of the educational system as shown by the Punjabis. When I had completed the research I thought the Punjabis had shown the very close relation between school and work that is likely to exist for all in the future and how school in England is forever the servant of a stratified society either maintaining or producing the different strata. Since the research I have been teaching in a comprehensive school and I am more than ever convinced that the Punjabis present a true picture and changes will only come when schools accept the close relation between education and work (rather than allying education and personal development) and aim to reduce the severe differences between levels of education and work that I described in the last chapter; bringing work and training into all levels in school and education, and fighting for education and training at all levels of work. Mixed ability teaching, the raising of the school leaving age (especially if it had been combined with some degree of choice for all between education and work) and more open access to

the sixth form are small steps in this direction.



APPENDIX 2 Notes and Questions on which the tape recorded discussions were based.

- 1) What is the point of going to school and the purpose of education?  
Views of self, parents and teachers.
- 2) What are the advantages of staying at school? Why do people stay or leave?
- 3) Comparison between schools (Grammar, Comprehensive, Secondary Modern). What do you like/dislike about your school? What subjects? What improvements could be made?
- 4) What helps people to be successful in education? Teachers, parents, hard work, brains, friends, money, etc.?
- 5) By the time boys are sixteen they have faced a choice of going for three broad categories of work:
  - Routine work without training
  - Apprenticeship
  - O and A levels.How do they decide what to do?
- 6) What do you mean by a 'better job'? What are the advantages and disadvantages connected with the three categories of work (above)? What are the connections between education and clean/dirty, easy/hard, office/factory work? Benefits and comparisons of the different professions (e.g. doctor and engineer). How does responsibility tie in with education?
- 7) What are the reasons for the success of Punjabi boys in school as compared with English boys? Comparison between Punjabi and English society. What is the reason for the high place of education in one society and not in the other?
- 8) Time out of school. How is it spent? How should it be spent according to self, friends and parents? What is bad behaviour according to you and your parents? What would make your parents proud of you? Peer-groups, how do they form?

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